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THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

By FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

The Apostle Paul and the Modern World
Jesus Christ and the Social Question
Jesus Christ and the Christian Character
The Christian Life in the Modern World
The Approach to the Social Question
The Religious Education of an American Citizen

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEACHING OF PAUL IN ITS RELATION TO SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS OF MODERN LIFE

BY

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

PLUMMER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MORALS (EMERITUS) IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1923.

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To

G. F. M.

HOW MANY SCHOLAR-MENDICANTS HAVE SOUGHT
TO SHARE THE BOUNTY OF YOUR GENEROUS THOUGHT;
AS CHILDREN HOLD THEIR LITTLE CUPS BELOW
TO CATCH THE FOUNTAIN'S LAVISH OVERFLOW!
HOW SWIFT YOUR JUDGMENTS, PIERCING ALL PRETENCE
WITH THE KEEN RAPIER OF OMNISCIENCE;
YET HOW SERENELY PASS YOUR ARDUOUS DAYS,
UNSCATHED BY CIRCUMSTANCE, UNSPOILED BY PRAISE!

THROUGH THE CONFUSING MAZE OF HISTORY
YOU WALK ASSURED, UNHESITATING, FREE;
THE WORLD BECOMES YOUR PROVINCE; AT YOUR FEET
THE EAST AND WEST AS DOCILE LEARNERS MEET.
YET FROM THESE HEIGHTS OF WISDOM YOU DESCEND
TO STRENGTHEN, COUNSEL, REASSURE, BEFRIEND;
AND IN YOUR AMPLE AND TRANSFORMING CREED
TRUTH BECOMES SERVICE, KNOWLEDGE TURNS TO DEED.

SUCH IS THE SCHOLAR AFTER PAUL'S OWN HEART;
FROM LESSER MEN AND MOTIVES SET APART,
YET GLADLY RECKONING AS LEARNING'S PRICE
THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SACRIFICE.
BEWILDERED MINDS, CAUGHT IN THE TURBID STREAM
OF MUDDY LOGIC OR OF DRIFTING DREAM,
TOUCH SOLID GROUND AGAIN AS THEY RECALL
THE SANER TEACHINGS OF A MODERN PAUL.

PREFACE

The Library of the Theological School in Harvard University contains more than two thousand volumes dealing with the life and letters of the Apostle Paul, or more than one for each year since his time, not to speak of the multitudinous commentaries and histories in which the teaching of Paul has an important place. Each detail or event of the apostle's experience has been explored with scrupulous attention,—his training and temperament, his language and learning, his journeys and adventures, his theology and ethics. Nothing could seem more superfluous, not to say presumptuous, than to burden the shelves with another volume on so familiar and exhausted a theme.

Two considerations, however, may, in some degree, reassure one who proposes a limited inquiry. On the one hand, the teaching of Paul has been within the last few years clarified in an unprecedented degree by researches which were primarily concerned, not with his career, or, indeed, with the Christian tradition, but with the state of the Roman Empire in Paul's time, and with the alien faiths which had there gained a hearing. That these influences are perceptible in many of the ideas which are characteristic of Paul has become generally recognized by modern scholars; but it

still remains an open question whether such influences were incidental or fundamental; whether the apostle appropriated this foreign material as contributions to his new faith, or yielded to its pressure so far as to become responsible for a new type of Christianity. No problem of New Testament criticism is more crucial than this; few have been more warmly debated; and the time seems to have come when the results of research may be estimated and applied by less instructed minds.

On the other hand, a not less significant transition is to be observed in the habit of mind now prevailing in the modern world. Never before, perhaps, in Christian history was religion regarded with so strange a mingling of indifference and responsiveness, of abandonment of dogma and desire for faith, of reaction from formalism and passion for reality, of neutrality toward institutional Christianity and loyalty to Jesus Christ. This temper of the present time has been for the most part expressed in a new attitude toward the person of Jesus, as the Master of souls rather than the source of dogma, as claiming obedience rather than definition, and as welcoming a discipleship not of intellectual conformity but of moral transformation. An unembarrassed and spiritual loyalty is, it is now generally agreed, the only type of Christian fellowship which is likely to commend itself to the mind of the modern world.

The time seems to have arrived when the same habit of mind must be recognized as one proceeds from the teaching of Jesus to that of Paul. Few

influences in human history have been so persistently utilized as that of Paul to reduce a gospel of life and motion to a lifeless system and a fixed form. Augustinianism and Calvinism, creeds of predestination and election, doctrinal confessions and sacramental practices, have been, for the most part, modifications or applications of what is known as Paulinism. The standards and tests still widely accepted as the essentials of Christian faith have been, in the main, derived from the Epistles of Paul rather than from the first three Gospels. The doctrinal scheme thus elaborately devised and conscientiously expounded has, however, become so remote from the spirit of the modern world as to run grave risk of being altogether abandoned. It is not so much that the ideas thus derived from Paul are denied as that they are ignored. Simplicity and reality have supplanted, as the essentials of faith, complexity and tradition. If religion is to survive in the modern world, it must be, not through consent to dogma, but through consecration of life. Doctrinal statements must change with the passing generations, while motives and ideals may remain undisturbed. Confessions and definitions are the enclosing shores between which the stream of the religious life must flow. The shores are shaped by the varying current and take the curve of its flood or drought; but the stream descends from higher sources and finds its own winding way. To trace the unexhausted stream through its shifting course; to discover continuity in change, the timeless in the temporary,

and the essential in the incidental,—this is the perennial problem which confronts students of the New Testament, and it meets them with dramatic interest as they review once more the familiar story of the Apostle Paul. The complex environment of his time, and the not less complex ideas which his fertile and subtle mind expressed, have, it would seem, disguised from many readers the real Paul; and it may not be untimely to reaffirm the grounds of his authority and leadership among the unprecedented problems of the modern world.

The following chapters are greatly indebted to the accurate learning of Professor Henry J. Cadbury of Harvard University, who, without assuming responsibility for conclusions, has scrutinized many statements, verified or corrected many details, and prepared an index.

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THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF PAUL

In a series of short studies,[1] an attempt has been made to examine the life and teaching of Jesus Christ in their relation to the needs and problems of the modern world. Throughout these volumes it was assumed that, while many problems of criticism and interpretation may remain unsolved or even unconsidered, one may derive from the first three Gospels enough unquestioned teaching to provide practical guidance in the affairs of modern life. Much which is reported of Jesus Christ is Palestinian in spirit and Oriental in form; much bears the marks of revision or adaptation; the Messianic hope colors, if it does not distort, the Master's sayings. Yet through these intervening obscurations, as through a mist which at times sweeps over the landscape and then lifts and leaves the horizon clear, one may discern the figure of

[1] "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," 1900; "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," 1905; "The Christian Life in the Modern World," 1914.

a consistent, if not a completely interpretable, teacher, surveying events as one who stood above them, where he could see in clear outline the details of the world below. "Jesus over the heads of his reporters," is, as Matthew Arnold affirmed, a judicious maxim for the reader of these artless records.[1] Unsophisticated and varied as the narratives may be, they reveal, in some degree, the personality which they imperfectly comprehend, and the temporary incidents which they record become the medium of his timeless teaching.

Jesus himself welcomed this indirect and suggestive way of instruction. To him the most congenial form of teaching was by parable. The incidental and familiar were to his mind symbols of the universal and eternal. The trivial round and common task were eloquent with messages of God's love and prophecies of God's kingdom. He did not, as a rule, define, he delineated; he did not tell what the kingdom of God was, he told what it was like. "Jesus said all this to the crowds in parables; he never spoke to them except in a parable." [2]

This habit of parabolic teaching involved, however, its own risks. Not every hearer could follow the Master in his swift and sensitive interpretations.

[1] "Literature and Dogma," 1873, p. 153: "We conceive Jesus as almost as much over the heads of his disciples and reporters as he is over the heads of so-called Christians now."

[2] Matt. xiii. 34. The citations from the New Testament throughout this volume are, with a few exceptions, from the scholarly and suggestive version of Professor James Moffatt: "The New Testament, A New Translation." Doran, 1913.

Hearing they might hear, and might not understand. Some would be ensnared in the unessential and miss the universal; some would misconceive the intended lesson, and misapply the Master's words. Only he that had ears to hear could hear aright. "Have you understood all this?"[1] Jesus said to his followers. His gospel, that is to say, is not automatic in operation. It presupposes preparedness and susceptibility. It assumes in a disciple, not pious emotion alone, but insight and common sense. The same responsiveness which the Master expected of those who heard him is still demanded of each modern reader or expositor. The incidental is still the instrument of the Eternal. Through the simple story of the Master's word and work and wanderings, as through superficial signs on the surface of the earth which indicate hidden ore, the deeper deposits of his spiritual insight and wisdom must be sought. The interpretation of the Gospels presents a perennial challenge both to intellectual discrimination and to spiritual discernment. The modern student, like the first disciples, must have ears to hear.

Here is the secret of that undiminished delight with which each generation renews the study of the Gospels. Ill-equipped as one may be with critical erudition, indifferent as he may be to many controversies which have vexed the theologians, insoluble as many problems which have divided the Church may appear, there remains at his command in the Master's teaching a residuum

[1] Matt. xiii. 51.

of reality, which tempts even the untrained inquirer to reëxamination and research. The problems of the modern world are infinitely more complex and bewildering than those which were encountered among the plain conditions of a Galilean ministry; but the view of life from above which Jesus maintained, the approach from within which he commended, and the recognition of movement toward a spiritual end which fortified his hope, still remain the principles which must sustain and restrain the social order of the modern world. Vast and varied undertakings of industry, statesmanship and compassion confront one to-day which Jesus could not foresee; but he still offers to those who must explore the dark problems of the present time a key, a lamp, and a hope. The view of life from above unlocks the world; the approach from within illuminates it; and the assurance of a spiritual intention encourages each faltering step. The Christian character must adjust itself to new conditions and unprecedented temptations; but the teaching of Jesus remains of undiminished applicability, and the interpretation of the modern world is still committed to the unsophisticated mind and the responsive will.

These conclusions, reached in preceding volumes, even if they be imperfectly grasped and inadequately applied, appear to give one at least a firm foothold among the difficult conditions of modern experience and service. Personal character with its tasks of duty, and social morality with its undertakings of service, are sustained and clarified by the

words and deeds which the Gospels vividly, even if incompletely, portray. The modern man who gives himself to a discipleship which is not of the lips alone but of the heart, may, it would seem, walk steadily and straight through the vicissitudes of his experience, as one who, whatever ignorance and insufficiency he must confess, has found a way which leads to truth, and a truth which ends in life.

No sooner, however, does one reach this sense of confidence in the teaching of Jesus than he is confronted by a new and perplexing problem. As he passes from the synoptic Gospels to the letters of Paul, he becomes aware of another climate of thought and hears another language of counsel and instruction. The teaching of Jesus was persuasive, suggestive, illuminating; the teaching of Paul was didactic, hortatory, polemical. Jesus was a seer; Paul was an advocate. Jesus synthesized life; Paul analyzed it. The teaching of Jesus had the quality of timelessness; Paul was a man of his own time, facing its issues and involved in its controversies. The thought of Jesus habitually moved above the level of contentious aims; the thought of Paul wrestled with the problems of his age and race. Jesus was a child of the countryside. In teaching and habit, he lived close to nature. The grain and the harvest, the fig-tree and the fruit, the birds in their flight, the hen and her chickens, the signs of weather, the sparrows and the sheep, the mountain, the lake and the lilies,—all these aspects of the world about him spoke to him of his

Father's kingdom. In his need of intimate communion with the Father, "he went up the hill by himself to pray," and "when evening came he was there alone." [1] In the letters of Paul, on the other hand, one finds hardly an allusion to these homely aspects of nature. The distant thunderings of cosmic tragedies are heard, and the groaning and travailing of creation; but the field, the lake and the fishes have no place in his picture of the world. Paul is a child of the city: "a citizen [he says of Tarsus] of no mean city." [2] "In his travels he passed, we are told, through some of the most glorious scenery in the world. Yet in his writings there is not so much as a blade of green grass." [3] His figures of speech are of the athletic games, the military career, the work of builders and architects, the procedure of the law, the tutor-slave leading a child to school, the runners, the race, and the prize. The story of his life is resonant with the tumult of the cities. In Thessalonica he finds the "town in an uproar." [4] At Ephesus "the city

[1] Matt. xiv. 23.

[2] Acts xxi. 39, A. V.

[3] R. H. Strachan, "The Individuality of Saint Paul," 1916, p. 289. H. Jacoby, "Neutestamentliche Ethik," 1899, s. 392, offers the interesting conjecture: "Where we are impressed by the operation of natural forces the Græco-Roman world saw the work of gods, each god ruling a special part of nature . . . To Paul, however, these gods were dæmons; and he was compelled to regard nature as controlled by dæmons. . . . It is quite intelligible, therefore, that with this view of nature, as a Divine work infected by dæmons, delight in its contemplation should be greatly diminished."

[4] Acts xvii. 5.

was filled with confusion." [1] He followed a trade, and "worked night and day, so as not to be a burden to any;" [2] and when, at Corinth, he found Aquila and Priscilla, "as he belonged to the same trade he stayed with them, and they all worked together. (They were workers in leather by trade.)" [3]

This contrast in environment is reflected in the contrast of spiritual temper. The tranquillity of nature broods over the Gospels; the confusion of the crowd is reproduced in Paul's stormy career. In Jesus, there is no divided allegiance, as of a "twice-born" life. In Paul, the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; and the world about him, instead of suggesting peace of mind and communion with God, seems a perilous snare from which he struggles to be free. The prevailing habit of mind in Jesus is as serene as a Palestinian sunset; the experience of Paul is as tumultuous as the noisy trafficking in a city's narrow streets. The soul of Jesus is like a star and dwells apart; the soul of Paul is like a man groping his way through the dark, who looks up to the star and is shown his path. Jesus walks on the waves of controversy and they are calmed; Paul struggles through them and wins his way to the shore. It is suggestive to recall the fact that in the comprehensive Calendar of Saints approved by ecclesiastical authorities, from St. Joseph the father of Jesus to the last subject of canonization, the Apostle Paul has held a very minor place. The

[1] Acts xix. 29. [2] II Thess. iii. 8. [3] Acts xviii, 2, 3.

most conspicuous convert to the new faith, its hero, preacher and martyr, beyond all comparison the most effective agent in its propagation, Paul is rarely one of the figures which Christian art has loved to commemorate, or before whose shrine the faithful have loved to bend. He is seldom portrayed except as the companion of Peter, and while the chief apostle holds the keys, Paul is to be recognized by the less sacred symbol of the sword. "Is there," asks Mrs. Jameson, "among the thousand representations of the apostle Paul, *one* on which the imagination can rest completely satisfied? I know not one." [1] The fact is that St. Paul was not a saint, but a very human hero, conscious of grave blunders and misdirected energy; confessing that to will was present with him but that it was hard to perform that which was good; brought into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members,[2] yet confident that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death.[3] He can still use violent language, and even "consign" a sinner "to Satan." [4] He often fails of that love which is "never irritated, never resentful"; [5] he does not "put up with fools . . . readily." [6] It could not be said of him, as was satirically said of Gladstone, that he was "without one redeeming vice." Not as a saint, or as though "already perfect," [7] but as one in

[1] "Sacred and Legendary Art," ed. 1857, I. 219, 225.
[2] Rom. vii. 23, A. V. [3] Rom. viii. 2, A. V.
[4] I Cor. v. 5. *Cf.* I Cor. xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8; v. 12; Phil. iii. 2.
[5] I Cor. xiii. 5. [6] II Cor. xi. 19. [7] Phil. iii. 12.

whom "sin resulted . . . in all manner of covetous desire"; [1] as one who cried "Who is weak, and I do not feel his weakness? " [2] this masterful leader, as he went his way, bore with him always the chastening remembrance of a misused past.

"Saint, did I say? with your remembered faces,
Dear men and women, whom I sought and slew!
Ah when we mingle in the heavenly places
How will I weep to Stephen and to you!

"Oh for the strain that rang to our reviling
Still, when the bruised limbs sank upon the sod,
Oh for the eyes that looked their last in smiling,
Last on this world here, but their first on God!" [3]

This confession of spiritual conflict, this sense of a divided nature, and its need of unremitting self-discipline and self-scrutiny, which has seemed to exclude Paul from the tranquil company of the beatified, is, however, precisely what brings his teaching peculiarly near to the struggles of ordinary human lives. To pass from intimacy with the spirit of Jesus to companionship with the spirit of Paul is as when the disciples came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and found themselves amid the "faithless and perverse generation" [4] at the mountain's foot. The figure of Jesus stands above the vicissitudes of life, his raiment white and glistening; the figure of Paul stands among the multitude, sore vexed and

[1] Rom. vii. 8. [2] II Cor. xi. 29.
[3] F. W. H. Myers, *Poems*, 1870, p. 5, "St. Paul."
[4] Luke ix. 41.

expelling its devil by fasting and prayer. The Epistles are the record of a "twice-born" life, chastened by self-conquest, but never beyond risk of reversion or defeat. They report the experience, not of a saint according to the tradition of the mediæval Church, but of that emergence of self-mastery through self-sacrifice which is coming to be recognized as the kind of sainthood most appropriate in the modern world.

Nor are these striking contrasts all that meet one as he proceeds with a survey of the New Testament. There is soon forced upon him the further discovery that, while the religion of Christians has been for the most part derived from the Gospels, the theology of Christians has been not less conspicuously derived from the Epistles of Paul; that while Christianity as a way of life has been the gift of Jesus, Christianity as a system of thought has been for the most part created by Paul. The great words of character,—Repentance, Forgiveness, Life, Peace,—make the substance of the Gospels; the great words of dogma,—Redemption, Election, Justification,—make the reiterated teaching of the Epistles. The Gospel of Paul begins where that of Jesus ends, with the story of the resurrection. All that preceded this supreme event,—the teaching and healing, the parables and promises, the beatitudes, the gathering of the Twelve, the betrayal, the agony,—is to Paul either unknown or unimportant. His theme is the risen Christ, the cosmic plan, the universalizing of redemption. The mission of Jesus, it has been

said by a most competent commentator, becomes, according to Paul, "not to do, but to die." [1] The discipleship of the evangelists is the product of personal intimacy; the discipleship of Paul is the product of a vision. "The one is a gospel *of* Jesus, and the other a gospel *about* Jesus. The one is concerned with the kindgom of God, the other with eternal life. The one is a religion of social salvation, the other a religion of personal salvation." [2] As one born out of due time, Paul has seen the Lord, yet this revelation of the risen Christ makes him, he stoutly asserts, "not one whit inferior." [3] "If by Christianity," a Swiss theologian has concluded, "we understand faith in Christ as the heavenly Son of God Who did not belong to earthly humanity, but Who lived in the Divine likeness and glory, Who came down from Heaven to earth, Who entered into humanity and took upon Himself a human form that He might make propitiation for men's sin by His own blood upon the Cross, Who was then awakened from death and raised to the Right Hand of God as the Lord of His own people, Who now intercedes for those who believe in Him, hears their prayers, guards and leads them, Who, moreover, dwells and works personally in each of those who believe in Him, Who will come again with the clouds of heaven to judge the World, Who will cast down

[1] W. Morgan, "Dudleian Lecture" at Harvard University, 1920 (unpublished).

[2] B. W. Bacon, "Jesus and Paul," 1921, p. 34.

[3] II Cor. xi. 5.

all the foes of God, but will bring His own people with Him into the home of heavenly light so that they may become like unto His glorified body—if this is Christianity, then such Christianity was founded principally by St. Paul and not by our Lord." [1]

Here is a transition which may well occasion perplexity. It is somewhat disguised from the reader of the New Testament by the intervention of the Book of Acts, as though a bridge of narrative carried the mind from one view of life to another; it is still further arrested by the lofty mysticism of the Fourth Gospel, as though a mountain must be scaled before the new view could be reached; but when at last both mountain and bridge have been passed and one enters the region of the Epistles, he seems to come into a new world. Back of him lie unstudied narratives, incidental teachings, and the serenity of a life at one with the Universe. Before him lie argument, controversy, passion, and a life wrestling with its own defects, with its adversaries, and with the mystery of the Universe. What does this transition mean? Where does it leave the reader? Who was the real founder of Christianity? Are the confessions and dogmas which have been transmitted as of the essence of the Christian religion derived from meditations on the Gospels or from elaborations of the Epistles? Should the organization of disciples which purports to represent the teaching of the New Testament be described as a Christian, or as a Pauline

[1] A. Meyer, "Jesus or Paul?" tr. 1909, pp. 122 f.

Church? Was Paul a bold innovator, involving the plain Gospel in subtle reflections which have perplexed Christians ever since, and from which one should turn with a sense of glad release to the simplicity of Christ, or was Paul the first to realize the meaning of the Gospel, and to give it a supreme place among the purposes of God? Or if, finally, neither of these conclusions be acceptable, can there be discovered, beneath this conspicuous divergence of teaching, an underlying unity of intention which may justify the claim made by Paul for himself, that, with all his subtlety of reasoning and flights of mysticism, he was still nothing else than a minister of Jesus Christ? This is the problem which immediately confronts one as he passes from the study of the Gospels to the more intricate and perplexing considerations which are suggested by the teaching of Paul.

The first and most obvious answer to this problem was given in undisguised and persuasive form by Renan: "I persist, then, in concluding that in the creation of Christianity the part of Paul must be regarded as far inferior to that of Jesus. One should, indeed, in my judgment, rank Paul below Francis of Assisi and the author of the 'Imitation,' each of whom saw Jesus by his side. . . . After having been for three hundred years, thanks to Protestant Orthodoxy, the master of Christian theology, Paul is witnessing in our time the end of his reign. Jesus, on the other hand, is more living than ever. It is no more the Epistle to the Romans which is the summary of Christianity, but the

Sermon on the Mount. The true Christianity, which will survive forever, is derived from the Gospels, not from the Epistles of Paul. The writings of Paul have been a peril and stumbling-block, the cause of the chief defects of Christian theology. Paul is the forerunner of the subtle Augustine, the arid Thomas Aquinas, the sombre Calvinist, the sour Jansenist, the ferocious theology which damns and predestines to damnation. Jesus is the forerunner of those who seek in dreams of the ideal a rest for their souls. What gives vitality to Christianity is that which we know—little as it is—of the teaching and personality of Jesus. The man dedicated to the ideal, the divine poet, the great artist, defies the changes of time. He alone sits eternally on the right hand of God the Father." [1]

The same conclusion has been stated, in less gracious manner, by a German scholar: "Paul was a descendant of Abraham, and, even after his conversion, a Pharisee from head to foot. Eight or ten years after the death of Jesus, and after Paul had for a while with all his might persecuted the Nazarenes, he was convinced by a vision on his way to Damascus that in attacking the teaching of Jesus he had been attacking the truth. The event may be psychologically intelligible, and I do not in the least doubt that so fanatical a brain was transformed by a hallucination into the opposite of its former self. It is, however, incredible that anyone acquainted with history should

[1] E. Renan, "Saint Paul," Paris, 1869, Ch. XXII. pp. 569 f.

have any confidence in this Paul. In the first chapter of the Book of Acts it is assumed as self-evident that one who desired to be an apostle must have lived with Jesus as a witness of his life. Paul never saw Jesus, not to speak of being his companion. His relations with Jesus were, first, that of hate toward the disciples, and secondly, that of a vision; than which no more untrustworthy sources of historical knowledge could be named. . . All that Paul says of Jesus and the gospel is without assurance of accuracy. . . . It is the logic of theologians to affirm that, although Israel did not recognize its Messiah in Jesus, he was none the less the Messiah of Israel; and that although the inner group which had received the gospel hated Paul as a corrupter of the truth, he was none the less the true representative of the gospel. A Church may justify such logic if it will, but one who has any scientific training must decline to follow either the logic or those who respect it." [1]

To these drastic criticisms may be added the cynical contempt of that master of paradoxes, Nietzsche. "Who, except a few scholars, knows that in it [the Bible] is the story of one of the most ambitious and importunate of souls, a superstitious and crafty mind,—the story of the apostle Paul? But for this remarkable story, the aberrations and storms of such a mind, of such a soul, there would be no Christianity; we should hardly have heard of a small Jewish sect whose teacher died on the cross. . . . If the writings of Paul

[1] Paul de Lagarde, "Deutsche Schriften," 1892, ss. 56 ff.

had been frankly read with a candid and free spirit, not as revelations of the Holy Spirit, or without reference to one's own personal need—and for 1500 years there were no such readers—the end of Christianity would long ago have arrived. . . The law was the cross to which he felt himself nailed. . . . Finally, the saving thought flashed on him in a vision, as was natural to an epileptic. . . . 'Here is the way out,' he said to himself; 'here is my perfect revenge.' . . . Then the ecstasy of Paul was at its height. . . . All shame, all subjection, all discipline, every barrier was removed. . . . This was the first Christian, the author of Christianity. Before him were only a few Jewish sectaries." [1]

[1] Werke, iv. 1895, "Morgenröthe," 68, *Der erste Christ.* This wholesale abandonment of Paul is by no means so modern and unprecedented a conclusion as some of its advocates appear to assume. Thus, as is pointed out to me by my learned colleague Professor G. F. Moore, in the tenth century A. D. the Karaite theologian Kirkisani (3d Treatise, ch. XVI.) maintained that "the religion of the Christians as practiced at the present time has nothing in common with the teachings of Jesus. It originated with Paul, who ascribed divinity to Jesus and prophetic inspiration to himself." (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, VII. 1904, p. 509.) This erudite evidence may encourage the casual conclusions often reached by modern amateurs; *e. g.*, Ignatius Singer, "The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and of Paul," London, 1919; a study which, the author says, was "forced upon me [him] in connection with the education of my [his] children," and in which a preface by J. C. Flower remarks that the author's "attitude to Paul, and his interpretation of Paulinism, is vehement to the point of contempt." "Paul," according to this non-professional critic, "became an apostle to the Gentiles, driven to it by chagrin, and not by the grace of God." "The Pauline shadow is cast back into the ante-

This solution of the problem of Paul by elimination is, however, confronted by serious difficulties. To dismiss from consideration the most important convert to the new faith, and the effect both of the man and his writings on Christian thought, is more like an evasion of history than its interpretation. It may be argued that Paul corrupted the Christianity of the Gospels; but it is much more certain that without Paul the Christianity of the Gospels would have remained the religion of a Jewish sect. It may be urged that much of the theology and Christology which are derived from Paul's letters has little affinity with the unstudied narratives of the synoptic Gospels; but it is not impossible that this contrast has been exaggerated by interpreters of Paul, who have been caught in the eddies of his argument, and missed the course of its main stream. Whatever Paul may have thought of Jesus, it can hardly be assumed that he was either unacquainted with the Gospel story, or incompetent to report it.

Pauline period. . . . The counsel of Paul has come to naught. It is a philosophy detached from the realities of life. . . . The philosophy of Jesus is still new, because it has never yet been listened to." (pp. 180 ff.) In lighter vein, but indicating the same reaction from Pauline teaching, a clever American essayist (Ellwood Hendrick, "Percolator Papers," 1919, pp. 173 ff.) observes the contrast between the "very simple gospel" of Jesus and the orthodoxy of the modern Church and concludes, "The orthodox are followers of Paul; the unorthodox are not. . . . It is Paul who keeps us apart, and who is the author of that of which many earnest Christians are seeking to rid themselves today. . . . He was the very opposite of him he called his master. Isn't it time to stop robbing Peter to pay Paul?"

Whether, as a youthful student in Jerusalem, he ever met Jesus face to face, is a question which has been often raised, but which permits no positive reply. On the one hand, the phrase "though we have known Christ after the flesh" [1] has been held "to be intelligible only if we suppose that he [Paul] was not in immediate want of further information concerning the outward personality of Jesus; he already knew with whom he had to do." [2] On the other hand, it is urged that, however suggestive this phrase appears to be, it occurs in the course of an argument which claims the authority of a vision as equal to that of personal acquaintance. The same apostle who, in another place, writes "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? " [3] as though recording a physical presence, adds, in the same letter, "Finally, he was seen by myself," [4] with manifest reference to the vision near Damascus.

However this question of direct acquaintance may be answered, it is evident that at many points the life of Jesus and the earlier years of the life of Paul were in such close proximity that complete ignorance of the one by the other becomes almost incredible. "Every year," we read of Jesus, "his parents used to travel to Jerusalem at the passover festival; and when he was twelve years old they

[1] II Cor. v. 16, A. V. Moffatt: "Even though I once estimated Christ by what is external." Weymouth: "Even if we have known Christ as a man."

[2] J. Weiss, "Paul and Jesus," tr. 1909, p. 55.

[3] I Cor. ix. 1.

[4] I Cor. xv. 8.

went up as usual to the festival," [1] and, about twenty years later, "as the time for his assumption was now due, he set his face for the journey to Jerusalem." [2] It was at some point in this interval that the young student Paul arrived from Tarsus to be "educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the strictness of our ancestral Law," [3] and is reported to have said of himself, "How I lived from my youth up among my own nation and at Jerusalem, all that early career of mine, is known to all the Jews." [4] It is difficult to believe that Paul's teacher, "a doctor of the Law, who was highly respected by all the people," [5] could have been unaware of the popular agitation created by the ministry of Jesus, or of the "large mob with swords and clubs who had come from the high priests and the elders of the people," [6] and confronted Jesus at the garden of Gethsemane. Even though the incidents of the last days of Jesus may have appeared beneath the notice of scholars, and they might prudently avoid the contagion of excitement, it would seem unlikely that a pupil of Gamaliel, bred in the hope of a coming Messiah, should not be informed of the itinerant preacher from Galilee whose coming to the capital had created such stir.

Again, according to the elaborate computations of modern scholars,[7] it was not later than A. D. 32, at the stoning of Stephen, that "the witnesses

[1] Luke ii. 41–42. [2] Luke ix. 51. [3] Acts xxii. 3.
[4] Acts xxvi. 4. [5] Acts v. 34. [6] Matt. xxvi. 47.
[7] Deissmann, "St. Paul," tr. 1913, Appendix I.

laid their clothes at the feet of a youth called Saul." [1] If, then, Paul could be described as a youth at a time so soon after the day when Jesus, at thirty years of age, was crucified, it would appear that the dates of their births must have very nearly coincided; and the dramatic picture is presented of these two lives, so remote from each other in circumstances and training, one in the secluded village of Nazareth, the other in the busy metropolis of Tarsus, being drawn toward each other, on paths converging to Jerusalem, there to become,—the one by the tragedy of the cross, the other by sad reflection on his own experience,—the chief instruments in history for the religious education of the Western world.

If one be inclined to enter at all into this region of surmise, he may be tempted to go even further. Is it not possible that in this bewildering contrast of physical proximity and spiritual remoteness, of quickened sympathy and hostile conviction, may be found the beginning of that sense of a divided life which wrung the heart of Paul, and which with such poignancy he confessed? On the one hand was his intellectual environment, the conservatism of scholarship, the academic tradition, all combining to encourage indifference to the vicissitudes of a wandering Nazarene. Gamaliel and his young pupil might inquire into the pretensions of Jesus, as they might consider those of his fellow-Galilean Judas; [2] but these agitations of the common people may have affected them as

[1] Acts vii. 58. [2] Acts v. 37.

little as a revival of religion may now affect the academic circle of a modern university town. On the other hand, this same period of student life may have been to Paul, as it has been to many a modern youth, a time of torturing conflict between the flesh and the spirit. "I serve the law of God," he says, "with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" [1] May not this schism of the spirit have prepared the way for the new revelation? Intellectually, the path to Jesus was closed to Paul. The whole story of teaching and preaching which the Gospels narrate must have seemed to the young scholar to describe a popular commotion with which he had nothing to do. If he were to become a disciple, it must be the disciple of a different kind of Messiah from the plain Jesus of Nazareth. His Christ must satisfy his academic mind. Yet he was confronted by the moral harmony and spiritual serenity of Stephen, who, "full of the Holy Spirit, gazed up at heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God's right hand." [2] Indifferent, therefore, as Paul may have been concerning the events of the life of Jesus, he could not escape the spiritual consequences of that obscure career. The strange combination of historical neutrality and spiritual loyalty which later marked his letters may have had its beginning, not in a lack of knowledge about Jesus, but in a knowledge tainted with scorn. Paul may have

[1] Rom. vii. 25, 24. [2] Acts vii. 55.

known Jesus only to despise him, and the memory of that condescending indifference may have made the most tragic element in his own self-contempt.

From this period of early and hostile proximity, Paul passes to become a companion of the Twelve. Three years after his conversion, he writes, "I went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Cephas. I stayed a fortnight with him." [1] Must not a conversation, so intimate and prolonged, have reviewed the ministry of Jesus? Although Paul writes, "I estimate no one by what is external; " [2] can it have been in ignorance of the external facts that he reinterprets the Gospel? Does he not, indeed, expressly write, "I passed on to you what I had myself received? " [3] Allusions of this nature, casual though they be, bring the letters of Paul very nearly to the position of first-hand evidence. It is true that their primary concern is with a risen and glorified Christ, yet the incidental references to the teaching and conduct of Jesus are the more impressive because undesigned. The most detailed account of the Lord's Supper, for example, is given, not by the evangelists, but by Paul; with the added assurance, "I passed on to you what I received from the Lord himself." [4] Again, it is Paul who repeats the teaching of Jesus concerning divorce, saying, "These are my instructions (and they are the Lord's, not mine); " [5] and it is Paul who gives "the Lord's instructions . . . that those who

[1] Gal. i. 18. [2] II Cor. v. 16. [3] I Cor. xv. 3.
[4] I Cor. xi. 23. [5] I Cor. vii. 10.

proclaim the gospel are to get their living by the gospel." [1] "Christ," he says again, "did not please himself." [2] "It is no weak Christ you have to do with, but a Christ of power. For though he was crucified in his weakness, he lives by the power of God." [3] "I am being killed in the body, as Jesus was." [4] Finally may be added the precious fragment,—transmitted, it is true, through the medium of the book of Acts, but singularly characteristic of the author of the Hymn to Love,—bidding his brethren "to work hard and succour the needy, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, 'To give is happier than to get.'" [5]

Confronted by intimations like these of Paul's conscious or subconscious appreciation of the teaching of Jesus, one would seem to be ill-advised, not to say audacious, who should depreciate the apostle for the sake of his Master, or regard as unimportant or misleading the earliest witness to the Christian faith. "Back to Jesus" might be a judicious maxim if Paulinism included nothing but rabbinical traditions and Hellenistic metaphysics. But "Back to Jesus" across a devastated area of abandoned testimony is a retreat as inadvisable as it is precipitate. The problem of Paul is to be solved, not by elimination, but by discrimination. The literary discernment of Matthew Arnold was quick to recognize this truth,

[1] I Cor. ix. 14; *cf.* Matt. x. 10. [2] Rom. xv. 3.
[3] II Cor. xiii. 3–4. [4] II Cor. iv. 10.
[5] Acts xx. 35. Further parallels and "echoes" are noted in Chapter VII.

and he applied his gifts of insight and irony to save Paul from his own interpreters. "The reign of the real St. Paul," wrote Matthew Arnold, in 1870, in answer to Renan, "is only beginning; his fundamental ideas, disengaged from the elaborate misconceptions with which Protestantism has overlaid them, will have an influence in the future greater than any which they have yet had. . . . Instead of lightly disparaging the great name of St. Paul, let us see if the needful thing is not rather to rescue St. Paul and the Bible from the perversions of them by mistaken men." [1]

At this point, then, there is presented to the inquirer the opposite alternative. May it not be maintained, in the light of these considerations, that Paul, instead of being the corrupter of Christianity, was its real founder? Was he not the first to discover the real significance of events which those who stood nearer to them did not understand? "The name 'disciple of Jesus' has," it has been said in a much debated volume, "little applicability to Paul. . . . Paul is essentially a new phenomenon,—as new, considering the large basis of common ground, as he could possibly be. . . . Jesus and Paul do not belong to the same stratum of Judaism. . . . The whole religious language of Paul is on another level from the language of Jesus." [2] Here is a new and somewhat startling possibility. Paul, not Jesus, it seems to be suggested, becomes responsible for the

[1] "St. Paul and Protestantism," 1870, pp. 4, 7.
[2] Wrede, "Paul," tr. 1907, pp. 165, 156.

Christian religion. The Epistles, not the Gospels, are to be regarded as its most precious documents. "The Gospels," an English scholar has not hesitated to affirm, "exhibit an incomplete situation, a raw audience, and an inchoate context of evidence. . . . The essence of Christianity is not in the bare fact but in the fact and its interpretation. . . . There is more inspiration in the Epistles than in the Gospels. . . . The inspirational element predominates in the Epistles and the exhibitionary element in the Gospels." [1] To the same effect

[1] P. T. Forsyth, "The Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 1909, pp. 133, 168, 169. The same conclusion is even more unequivocally expressed in his "Theology in Church and State," 1915, p. 31: "The Epistles are more inspired than the Gospels. We are in more direct contact with Christ. We are at one remove only. We hear the man who had Christ's own interpretation of His work. . . . The Gospels, with their unspeakable value, are yet but the propædeutic to the Epistles; and most of the higher pains and troubles of the Church to-day arise from the displacement of its centre of gravity to the Gospels."

To the same effect, though with quite another, and more dubious, implication concerning the teaching of the Gospels, is the erudite discussion of Professor J. G. Machen, as summarized in the following passage: "The details of Jesus' earthly ministry no doubt had an important place in the thinking of Paul. But they were important, not as an end in themselves, but as a means to an end. . . . Jesus, according to Paul, came to earth, not to say something, but to do something; He was primarily not a teacher, but a Redeemer. He came, not to teach men how to live, but to give them a new life through His atoning death. . . . All that Jesus said and did was for the purpose of the Cross. . . . If Jesus was what the liberal theologians represent Him as being—a teacher of righteousness, a religious genius, a guide on the way to God—then not Jesus but Paul was the true founder of historic Christianity." "The Origin of Paul's Religion," 1921, pp. 167 ff.

is the conclusion reached, from quite another angle, by Professor Royce: "So far as we know of the teachings of the man Jesus, they did not make explicit what proved to be precisely the most characteristic feature of Christianity." "This community,—not Paul himself as an individual, . . . is the real human founder of Christianity." [1] "The being whom he [Paul] called Christ Jesus was in essence the spirit of the universal community." [2]

The first impression made by these propositions on the unsophisticated reader is one of sheer bewilderment. The New Testament seems to be turned upside down. Jesus, it would appear, was not understood until he was gone. Indeed, he did not understand himself. His resurrection was the first intimation of his real nature. What he said of himself to his chosen disciples was but a premonition of that which the Apostle Paul discovered him to be. When Paul says, "The foundation is laid, namely, Jesus Christ, and no one can lay any other," [3] he is speaking, not of the teacher of Nazareth or of the Sermon on the Mount and the parables, but of the eternal Christ, whom he himself was the first to proclaim. The Christian religion, in other words, is not to be derived from Jesus Christ, but from reflections on Jesus Christ, and the Jesus of history becomes subordinated to the Christ of dogma. "Christianity, as we know it to-day," it has been unreservedly announced in a

[1] J. Royce, "The Problem of Christianity," 1913, Vol. I. p. 416.
[2] J. Royce, "The Hope of the Great Community," 1916, p. 48.
[3] I Cor. iii. 11.

conservative Review, "is largely St. Paul's Christianity, and to the modern mind we have to say that while the Jesus of history is justly and for ever an object of admiration, idealization, and imitation, it is the Christ of St. Paul, . . . the sacrificial Redeemer and exalted Lord, who is to be with us always, even to the end of the world." [1]

This apparently revolutionary conclusion may commend itself to some minds because it tends to confirm the accepted teaching of the later Church. The summons "Back to Jesus," which, a generation ago, recalled attention from the Epistles to the Gospels, was acceptable to those who were primarily concerned, not with doctrine but with life; the opposite tendency, to regard as fundamental the teaching of Paul, falls in with the conclusion that the Christian life must rest on dogmatic foundations. For the obvious fact is that the creeds of Christendom are not easily derived from the synoptic Gospels, in whose artless narratives the religion of Jesus is reported to be one of personal consecration and discipleship. If no man can lay other foundation than is described in those ingenuous records, then the elaborate structure of dogma which has been built by the theologians of the Church may be reasonably regarded as in serious peril. When, for example, Professor Forsyth asks: "If we keep critically to the Synoptics can the Christ of the New Testament be retained? " the answer must be either dubious or in the negative. A similar difficulty was

[1] *London Quarterly Review*, October, 1920, p. 190.

recognized by Professor Royce in enforcing his philosophy of loyalty as of the essence of Christian faith. The consciousness of the Community is not, he confesses, conspicuous in the Gospels. "We cannot say that Jesus explicitly intended to found the Christian Church." On the other hand, the "force of collective religious fervor is plainly recognized by Paul." Thus the Community, which according to this view of Paul's teaching is the Body of Christ, becomes the centre of all later forms of Christian life and faith.

This solution of the problem of Paul is, however, even less likely to be welcomed by the uninstructed reader than Renan's conclusion that the end of Paul's reign had arrived. Instead of being a belated disciple of Jesus, Paul, in this view, becomes the first interpreter of Jesus. Instead of being the missionary of Christ he becomes the discoverer of Christ. Such a view may seem to save orthodoxy, but it does so at great cost. It may fortify Christology but it surrenders Jesus. It denies to the consciousness of Jesus himself the knowledge of the faith which he inspired. This procedure seems to propose a gathering of the fruits of the Christian religion while cutting away its roots. It undermines the foundation of faith while building its superstructure. Who could be more astonished than the Apostle Paul, not to say more aflame with indignation, if it were reported of him who had determined "to be ignorant of everything except Jesus Christ," [1] that he knew better than his

[1] I Cor. ii. 2.

Master what that Master meant to teach, and that "the essence of Christianity was to be found, not in the facts, but in their interpretation"?

Nor is this the only difficulty with which one is confronted when he proposes to derive the essential truths of the Christian religion from the teaching of Paul. For behind the transition in which, as has been lately said, "the preaching of repentance and of the Kingdom of God, begun by Jesus, passed into the sacramental cult of the Lord Jesus Christ," [1] there is conspicuous in the writings of Paul himself a formative influence which is not only independent of the Gospel story but which is not even Christian in its origin. Throughout the Roman world in Paul's time had spread the doctrines and practices known as "Mysteries." These varied faiths and forms, with their intricate rituals and secret initiations, converged in an invasion of Roman life, imparting to its satiated mind a new sensation of mystical exaltation and communion. The symbolism of these mystery-religions was in certain aspects uniform. All were dramas of redemption, plans of salvation, ways of purgation. In all, the supreme being descended into human life, which in its turn became divine. Degrees of initiation, baptism by water, a mystical meal for the privileged,—all these were familiar incidents of Oriental cults. "The death and resurrection of the saviour-god,—Attis, Serapis, Adonis, etc.,—were dramatically exhibited before the eyes

[1] F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, "The Beginnings of Christianity," Vol. I, 1920, p. vii.

of the assembled worshippers, with every circumstance that could touch the imagination and excite the feelings. . . . The neophyte died with the god to his material and mortal existence, and rose with him to a new life divine and immortal." [1] "Whatever name they bear, their ultimate aim was identical—to raise the soul above the transiency of perishable matter to an immortal life through actual union with the Divine." [2]

It is difficult, under the changed conditions of the world, to appreciate the rapid expansion and profound appeal of these mystery-religions. Rome, satiated with triumphs but destitute of spiritual power, welcomed these imported faiths, as the modern world in its reaction from the strain of war has become susceptible to new and strange religious cults. National religion had become bankrupt, and eager minds responded to these assurances of a saviour-god who promised to the initiated both illumination and salvation. The word "Enthusiasm" registers the exhilaration excited by this sense of a mystical union with the Divine. The acceptance of Mithraism became so widespread as to lead Renan to surmise: "One might say that if the expansion of Christianity had been arrested by some mortal disease, the world would have been Mithraist. . . . Mithraism had its baptism, its eucharist, its love feasts, its penitence, its expiations, its anointings. Its

[1] W. Morgan, "The Religion and Theology of Paul," 1917, pp. 127, 130.

[2] Kennedy, "St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions," 1913, p. 79.

chapels resembled small churches. It created a bond of fraternity among the initiated." [1]

Into this bewildering multiplicity of tradition and ceremonial Paul was born. "The mysteries, and the religious societies which were akin to the mysteries, existed on an enormous scale throughout the eastern part of the Empire; " [2] and the elaborate rites and mythologies of these redemptive dramas must have been familiar in Paul's city of Tarsus. Even his training in the rigid monotheism of Jerusalem could not detach his mind from these dramatic pictures of redemption; and when he returned from the prolonged reflections on the new faith to which his vision called him, his vocabulary bore the marks of sympathetic familiarity with the mysteries, and, with a constantly increasing emphasis, his teaching becomes that of a redemptive plan. He discriminates like an adept between types of character which are carnal, natural, and spiritual; [3] he writes, as one might report of the ritual of Osiris or Mithra, that "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." [4] The dominant word of his message becomes that of the mysteries, salvation. He prays for a door of utterance, to speak the "mystery of Christ." [5] He is a "steward of the mysteries

[1] Marc Aurèle, 1886, pp. 577, 579.

[2] E. Hatch, "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church," 1890, p. 291.

[3] I Cor. ii. 14 ff.

[4] Rom. vi. 5, A. V.

[5] Col. iv. 3, A. V.

of God." [1] Is there not indicated, it is now boldly asked, in this appropriation of phrases and rites, a second conversion of the apostle, from a Hebrew to a Hellenic faith? Is not a teaching which purports to be that of the gospel of Jesus in reality a masterly interpretation of the mystery-religions in terms of the person of Christ? Surveying the thought of his time, in its eager search for evidence of Divine communion, does not Paul ask himself: "Is not this cosmic process of salvation which the mysteries concur in announcing,—this descent of the saviour-god, this gathering to himself the initiated,—actually fulfilled in the mission of Jesus Christ? Has not this dream of the ages been historically realized? Attis, Osiris, and Mithra were but legendary figures; but my Christ was a real person, within the horizon of memory, whose resurrection achieved that of which the mystery-religions had dreamed." The Christianity of Paul, as one of its most brilliant expositors has said, would thus "not assume to be a mystery-religion like others, only superior to them; it assumed to realize that which the pagan cults and mysteries did not in any way realize." "It was to the Christian mysteries, not to the Gospel of Jesus, that the ancient world was converted, or could be converted. The ancient world would never have consented to become Jewish. Instead of changing the Gospel, as is often said, the mystery saved the Gospel, by making it a relatively universal religion . . . a

[1] I Cor. iv. 1, A. V.

religion independent of Judaism, a scheme of universal salvation." [1]

Such, according to many modern scholars, was the transformation of the simplicity of a Galilean Gospel into the subtleties and sacraments which surround a saviour-god. "The whole conception of Christian worship was changed. But it was changed by the influence upon Christian worship of the contemporary worship of the mysteries and the concurrent cults." [2] Does not this conclusion, if it be accepted, fortify the view that the Apostle Paul was the founder of Christianity? If, as Loisy summarizes the results of his inquiry, the mysteries "enlarged the idea of God," the "idea of Christ," and "the idea of salvation"; if the simple story of the Gospels was expanded by Paul into a fulfillment of those religious dreams which had hovered before the Roman world; then it must not only be admitted that the transition represents one of the most strategic and revolutionary adventures in the history of thought, but also that the great figure in the new movement is not Jesus, but Paul.

Yet the more one is led to emphasize these aspects of the teaching of Paul, the more difficult is the dilemma in which Paulinist Christianity thus becomes involved. For the cosmic drama thus conceived, with its descending God and redemptive sacrifice,—this which has become the corner-stone

[1] A. Loisy, "Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien," 1914, p. 357, 340.

[2] Hatch, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

of many schemes of salvation which Christian theologians have built,—if it be derived from these alien cults, must be regarded as essentially a non-Christian, or at least as a composite, creation, appropriating so much from extra-Christian sources that, as has been lately affirmed by an Anglican scholar, "There were gradually imported [into the conduct of baptism, the eucharist, etc.] many ideas which were almost absent from these institutions in their primitive Jewish-Christian form." [1] In other words, many elements of Pauline teaching which have been often regarded as fundamental would become, if traced to this origin, brilliant adaptations from Oriental mythology, and the theologian who accepts them as of the essence of Christianity would in reality be abandoning the discipleship of Jesus for a revival of pagan mysticism.

It is a curious Nemesis which might thus issue from the subordination of the simple narratives of the Gospels to the daring speculations of the great apostle. What was welcomed as a reënforcement of orthodox belief might turn out to be not even Christian in origin, and the religion of Jesus might be displaced by the pagan tradition of a saviour-god. A surprising end might thus be reached through acceptance of the Pauline mystery as the bulwark of conservative theology; and the drastic comment of Martineau might be even more justified to-day than when that great and devout scholar made it

[1] H. Rashdall, "The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology," 1919, p. 484.

thirty years ago: "Christianity, as defined or understood in all the Churches which formulate it, has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources: from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its preconceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets." [1]

At this point, then, the problem presented by the teaching of Paul becomes more completely defined. On the one hand there confronts the inquirer a transition from the simplicity of the Gospels to the complexity of another world of thought and experience; but on the other hand there is a not less tenacious grasp of the spirit of the Gospels, which lifts the finest utterances of Paul to the level of those of Jesus himself. On the one hand is a bold re-statement of Christian origins in the language of Oriental mysteries; while on the other hand, shining through these non-Christian forms of speech, is a personality after the mind of Christ, untiring in devotion, passionate for righteousness, and offering on his own part what he asks of others, "a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God." [2] Thus, as Harnack has said, "Those who blame him [Paul] for corrupting the Christian religion have never felt a single breath of his spirit, and judge him only by mere externals; . . . those who extol or criticise him as a founder of religion are forced to make him bear witness against himself on the

[1] J. Martineau, "The Seat of Authority in Religion," 1890, p. 650.

[2] Rom. xii. 1.

main point, and acknowledge that the consciousness which bore him up and steeled him for his work was illusory and self-deceptive." [1]

What is the problem thus presented? It is obviously that of discriminating between the temporary and the permanent; of discovering among the teachings which time has displaced the elements which time cannot destroy; of applying instructions designed to meet the needs of one age to the unprecedented and vastly more complex needs of another age. It is the constantly recurring problem which all thinking about religion has to meet, and which never was more pressing and critical than at the present time. Much which seems to one generation precious or essential may become to the next generation untenable or unconvincing. Nothing, for example, has been more impressive, since the modern world was devastated by war, than the discovery that social reconstruction involves theological reconstruction, the surrender of many positions which had been hotly defended and the concentration of force at those strategic points which neither science nor criticism can successfully attack. The question now before those who care for religion is not how much can be claimed for it, but how much of it can be saved. How shall the increasing indifference to the creeds and forms of the Christian Church be checked by an adaptation of truth to the needs of a new world? How shall the superimposed structures of doctrine and ritual be distinguished from the foundations of the Chris-

[1] "What is Christianity?" tr. 1901, p. 176.

tian life, and the structure of faith be rebuilt, not on sand, but on rock?

This was the problem which confronted Paul as he contemplated the adjustment of a Palestinian faith to the thoughts and desires of a Roman world; and his interpretation of the mission of Jesus, with its appropriation of the language and practices of his time, was an epoch-making achievement of spiritual genius. Paul's conception of the universe, with its contending forces and impending dissolution; his physiology of men, cattle, birds, and fishes; his anticipation of a sublime moment when at the last trump the dead shall be raised incorruptible; his mystic union with a glorified Christ,—all this, which was the product of reflections on the philosophy and cosmology current in his own time, has shared the fate of many other ancient systems of thought, and must be regarded as ephemeral, local, or even imaginative; but behind these bold and sweeping generalizations, which the spirit of his own age permitted and reënforced, stands the figure of a man of the world who was at the same time a mystic; aggressive yet humble; self-confident yet self-effacing; imperious yet affectionate; not worthy to be called an apostle yet not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle; a "prismatic"[1] nature, which might confess itself variable and shifting, but which could never be equivocal or timid or ungenerous or dull. "Much might be said," it has been remarked by one of the most convincing of

[1] J. H. Ropes, "The Apostolic Age," 1906, p. 101.

modern scholars, "in criticism of Paul's Christology—if it were not for Paul. . . . The man is so large and so strong, so simple and true, so various in his knowledge of the world, so tender in his feeling for men—'all things to all men'—such a master of language, so sympathetic and so open—he is irresistible. The quick movement of his thought, his sudden flashes of anger and of tenderness, his apostrophes, his ejaculations—one feels that pen and paper never got such a man written down before or since. Every sentence comes charged with the whole man—half a dozen Greek words, and not always the best Greek—and the Christian world for ever will sum up its deepest experience in 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.'" [1]

How to disentangle, in the teaching of this extraordinary man, the timeless elements from the temporary; how to discriminate between his main intention and the by-products of his thought; how to discover within the circumstances of an ancient world the qualities which are fit for any world; how to detach the personality of Paul from the limitations of his environment and to interpret Paul in terms of the modern world, as Paul interpreted the Gospel in terms of Paulinism,—this is the problem, which is not to be met either by a reversion from Paul to the Gospels, or by the sub-

[1] T. R. Glover, "The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire," 1909, p. 155.

ordination of the Gospels to Paul; and however imperfectly it may be solved, there is certainly no problem of biography or of literary history which presents a more commanding challenge to the modern mind.

CHAPTER II

THE MAN

THE problem of appreciation and discrimination thus proposed must be approached by reviewing briefly the familiar story of Paul's life and the general character of the letters which contain his teaching. What kind of man, one must ask himself, was this, who so candidly reveals himself in his writings, and what made him write as he did to various churches and friends?

The external adventures of Paul's dramatic career have been examined with enormous expenditure of erudition, and it would be both presumptuous and impracticable to attempt any addition to this mass of information. It is not essential, however, for the present purpose, to examine these difficult questions of topographical or chronological detail. On the contrary, the first precaution which the ordinary inquirer must observe is to see to it that the much debated investigations of geography and chronology, of obscure sayings and disconnected paragraphs, shall not distract attention from Paul's controlling aim. An estimate of Paul may err by excess, hardly less than by defect, of learning. His life is so fully reported that it needs but brief review, and his letters are so undisguised that their primary purpose is not difficult to detect. The man may be sufficiently

known through his own record of experience, and the letters may be, at least in some degree, interpreted through acquaintance with the man.

Concerning Paul himself, it is reassuring to remember that there is at one's command a more adequate and trustworthy amount of biographical material than exists in the case of almost any other character in ancient history. The Book of Acts, it is true, may be regarded as of somewhat limited authority, because of its obvious design to conciliate the earlier differences between Paul and Peter, and to subordinate the late recruit to the original leader. It is Peter, according to this record, who, through the vision of an open heaven, is convinced that the new faith is for Gentiles as well as Jews; Paul, on the other hand, submits himself to the elders at Jerusalem, and only after a term of probation is trusted as a missionary. Yet, though this narrative must be estimated with reserve when it conflicts with the testimony of Paul himself, it bears the marks of acquaintance with the facts, and in the later chapters has an unmistakable note of intimacy. "On the whole," concludes one of the least restrained of modern critics, "and considering the character of the book, Acts is a first-rate historical document, and singularly easy to understand, so far as the mere enumeration of events is concerned." [1] "The Book of Acts," Harnack has affirmed, "is not only, as a whole, a genuinely historical work, but also in the great part of its detail trustworthy. . . . His [the author's]

[1] Lake, "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," 1911, p. 13.

real weaknesses as an historian seem to me to lie . . . in the first place, in his credulity in reference to cases of miraculous healing and of 'spiritual' gifts; secondly, in a tendency to carelessness and inaccuracy, often of a very far-reaching influence in his narrative, which may be partly due to his endeavor after brevity; lastly, in a tendency to work up important situations." . . . [Yet] "from the standpoint of historical criticism it [Acts] is a substantial and, in many aspects, extraordinary work." [1]

When one turns from the Book of Acts to Paul's own letters he passes from narrative to autobiography. With almost unparalleled candor these letters report the aspirations, convictions, grievances, and hopes of a great man. He exposes, probably with exaggeration, his own sins; he bewails his deficiencies but proudly claims his rights. He humbles himself, justifies himself, and asserts himself, with equal emphasis. "Let us confess that Paul, as he lives before us in his Epistles, is a man who holds many men within him,—so many indeed that we may describe him as the most unintelligible of men to the analytical reason of a critic who has never warmed to the passion or been moved by the enthusiasm of humanity; but the most intelligible of men to the man who has heard within himself the sound of all the voices that speak in man." [2] The contact of this complex

[1] "The Acts of the Apostles," tr. 1909, p. xxxix.

[2] A. M. Fairbairn, "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 1902, p. 440.

personality with the modern reader is, in an extraordinary degree, intimate and persuasive. The sense of reality remains undiminished by the passing of centuries or the change of circumstances. Paul, alike in his confessions, his self-conquests, and his impatience, seems very like a modern man.

Much learning has been expended in determining the authenticity and chronological order of these letters. It is generally conceded that those addressed to Timothy and Titus contain teachings which must have been elaborated at a later date than that of Paul; and the letter to the Ephesians appears to represent either a later writer or a later phase of Paul's thought. Yet, in the nine letters which have survived all reasonable criticism there remains an ample body of evidence. They are the earliest in date of the New Testament documents, the death of Paul having preceded the final version of the earliest of the Gospels.

Who, then, was this man, and what were the experiences which marked his career and enriched his mind and will? Paul was a Jew, of pure descent,[1] "of the tribe of Benjamin," [2] "the Hebrew son of Hebrew parents." [3] His name was Saul (desired), though, as was not infrequent with Jews living in Greek towns, he was known by a Greek name, Paul, also.[4] He appears to have been

[1] II Cor. xi. 22. [2] Rom. xi. 1. [3] Phil. iii. 5.

[4] O. Pfleiderer, "Primitive Christianity," tr. I (1906), p. 40, note: "The combination of a Greek with a Hebrew name was frequent among Hellenistic Jews, and it is probable that in the case of Paul-Saul it does not date only from the incident re-

throughout his life subject to some bodily ailment, which he describes as "a thorn in the flesh," [1] and concerning which Dean Stanley remarks that "the obscurity for us is occasioned by the very fact that it was plain to contemporaries." [2] This chronic malady has been variously surmised by ingenious commentators to have been epilepsy,[3] nearsightedness,[4] hysteria,[5] or headache.[6] Whatever this affliction may have been, it was, Paul said, "an angel of Satan to rack me." [7] It seems to have excited some repugnance in beholders,[8] and led certain critics to say of him, "His personality is weak and his delivery is beneath contempt." [9] Renan, with characteristic candor, excludes the conjecture which he appears to think would first suggest itself.[10] In any event, the "thorn," in-

corded in Acts xiii. 7 ff., but from his home in Tarsus, the twofold designation corresponding to the dual character of his interests and education."

[1] II Cor. xii. 7.

[2] "Epistles to the Corinthians," 1865, p. 547.

[3] Wrede, *op. cit.*, p. 23: "Paul, like other great historical figures—for instance Cæsar and Napoleon—suffered from epileptic fits."

[4] Gal. vi. 11. "See what big letters I make, when I write you in my own hand." *Cf.* Gal. iv. 15; Acts xxiii. 5.

[5] Weinel, "St. Paul, the Man and his Work," tr. 1906, p. 91: "The severe nervous affliction from which St. Paul suffered was probably not epilepsy, but hysteria."

[6] See the enumerations in Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

[7] II Cor. xii. 7.

[8] Gal. iv. 14.

[9] II Cor. x. 10.

[10] "It was, apparently, some physical infirmity; for the attrac-

stead of subduing Paul's temperament, pricked it to reaction; and his touching confession that in weakness God's power is fully felt,[1] has brought reassurance to multitudes of lives which have had to contend against physical disability, and to convert an experience of pain into an accession of power.

In early youth, he was sent to Jerusalem, where as the son of a Pharisee[2] he entered the school of the illustrious Gamaliel. Here he was instructed in the "subtle dialectics and ingenious hermeneutics," derived from the great Hillel, "the Aristotle of rabbinical theology."[3] "I am a Jew," Paul says, "born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the strictness of our ancestral Law."[4] Thus, an inherited and inbred Judaism remained the foundation of Paul's thought. He claims the promise made to the patriarchs. "The real sons of Abraham are those who rely on faith."[5] "You are the children of the Promise, brothers, like Isaac."[6] The Hebrew cosmology, partitioning the universe into three planes,—the heavens above, the terrestrial world below, and the abode

tion of carnal pleasures seems unlikely, since he himself assures us he has insensibility." "Les Apôtres," 1866, pp. 170 ff., citing I Cor. vii. 7, 8, and context.

[1] II Cor. xii. 9.

[2] Acts xxiii. 6.

[3] Sabatier, "The Apostle Paul," tr. 1891, p. 49, and note.

[4] Acts xxii. 3.

[5] Gal. iii. 7.

[6] Gal. iv. 28.

of the dead beneath, the angelic and malicious presences governing human life, the original Eden and its sin, the judgment day when the dead shall rise and know their fate,—all this was wrought into the early education of Saul, and reappears in Paul's maturer philosophy of religion. "You know," he writes to the Galatians, "the story of my past career in Judaism . . .; how I outstripped many of my own age and race in my special ardour for the ancestral traditions of my house." [1] "It is evident that a large proportion of what is traditionally known as Paulinism . . . is the Jewish theology of his time." [2]

Yet, together with this consistent loyalty to his hereditary Hebraism, there is revealed in Paul an acquaintance with Greek thought and life which has perplexed many scholars, alike by its intimacy and by its limitations. It has been often urged that this acquaintance was superficial or accidental; that he might quote at Athens "some of your own poets," [3] or cite the comic poet Menander,[4] or even appropriate the terms of Greek ethics, without more than a casual knowledge assimilated by a susceptible mind. Paul's habitual attitude towards Greek thought is one of indifference or hostility. He protests that he cares nothing for the "elaborate words of wisdom" [5] which Greek rhetoric and philosophy inculcated, and that his teaching was to the Greeks "sheer folly." [6] His forms of argument are rab-

[1] Gal. i. 13, 14.
[2] Weinel, "Paulus," 2te Aufl., 1915, s. 14.
[3] Acts xvii. 28.
[4] I Cor. xv. 33.
[5] I Cor. ii. 1.
[6] I Cor. i. 23.

binical, and the dark problems of moral conflict through which his mind gropes its way lie far from the sunny region of Greek serenity and charm. Yet there are many evidences of familiarity with the Greek mind, if not of sympathy with the Greek spirit, which make it difficult to regard Paul as an alien. "He uses Greek," it has been justly said, "not like a foreigner who has acquired it in mature years, but with the ease and freedom of one born to its use." [1] The most eminent living historian of Greek literature has expressed himself on this point with characteristic confidence and force. "Paul did not gain directly the Greek elements in his culture. . . . Hellenism is for him an antecedent condition. . . . He is carved from a solid block. He is a Jew, as Jesus is a Jew. Yet this Jew, this Christian, thinks Greek, and writes it . . . and this Greek has no relation to any school or pattern, but issues unprompted, in an overflowing strain straight from his heart, yet remains Greek, and not translated Aramaic (as in the sayings of Jesus). All this makes Paul a classic in Hellenism. At last, at last, another voice is speaking Greek, out of a fresh and inward experience. . . . This style of writing is Paul, and no one but Paul. It is neither the style of a private letter, nor yet of literature . . . but of something between. All literature was to him folly. The artistic strain was lacking, yet, for this very reason, one must estimate more highly the artistic result at which he arrives. . . . Paul demonstrated for all time that man can find

[1] J. H. Ropes, "The Apostolic Age," 1906, p. 104.

God by another path than that which the Greeks had found and taught." [1] In short, the very spontaneity, precipitancy, and unstudied character of Paul's Greek would seem to indicate, not imperfect acquaintance, but rather a familiarity which feels no need of exposition or defence. Paul remains a Jew, but his unclassical Greek has become a classic.[2]

A third agent in moulding the mind of Paul was the environment of Roman culture. Tarsus was not only a centre of Greek thought but had been the seat of a Roman governor; and the young Saul, though born of the seed of Abraham, had acquired, either through service by his ancestors or through purchase by them, the privilege of Roman citizenship. "Are you a Roman citizen?" asked the commander at Jerusalem, and Paul answered "Yes." "The commander replied, 'I had to pay a large sum for this citizenship.' 'But I was born a citizen,' said Paul." [3] It was a condition of birth which was singularly propitious for one who was to

[1] Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, "Die griechische Literatur des Altertums," 2te Aufl., 1907, ss. 159, 160 (in "Die Kultur der Gegenwart," ed. Hinneberg).

[2] Commentators have, as a rule, failed to observe that the fine saying of Paul: "There is no law against those who practice such things" (Gal. v. 23), occurs in precisely the same words in Aristotle's Politics, III, xiii, 14: (*κατὰ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστι νόμος, αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος* = "Such men therefore are not the object of law; for they are themselves a law." Tr. Ellis, 1912.) Does this identity indicate that Paul had read Aristotle, or is the apostle merely seizing on a classic and pertinent phrase?

[3] Acts xxii. 27, 28.

carry his cause on successive journeys through many Roman provinces, and to come at last to Rome itself. The *imperium Romanum* dominated the entire ancient world, and that stupendous unity, with its centralized control and its diversified administration, may well have suggested to Paul his figure of the body and its members, which more than once, and with such effectiveness, he applied to fellowship in Christ. "As the human body is one and has many members, all the members of the body forming one body for all their number, so is it with Christ." [1] The organization of fellowship which Paul proposed was, it is true, a much more limited unity than the vast fabric of the Roman Commonwealth. To conclude, with Professor Royce, that a new social order was Paul's chief design, and that "the being whom he called Christ Jesus was in essence the spirit of the universal community," seems to leave quite out of account the obvious fact that Paul's supreme attachment was not to a community, but to a person. The body of which he writes, with its many members, has its unity, not in the members, but in the Head. The social order is the instrument of the "mind of Christ." Paul's Beloved Community was not a universal society, but a Church. Within the mass of Roman civilization, there was the hidden unity of Christ's people. Imperial Rome was but a symbol of Christian organization. The Christian life in this world was, to Paul, "a colony of heaven." [2]

[1] I Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xii. 4, 5; Col. iii. 11.

[2] Phil. iii. 20.

In Paul, then, as perhaps in no other historic personality, the three main currents of ancient history met. He was a Jew, but his Hebrew faith had a Hellenic form and a Roman environment. On the cross of Jesus an inscription was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, as though the three types of contemporary civilization met at its feet. What was thus written on the cross of Jesus was written on the life of Paul, and this unprecedented convergence of influences and traditions prepared the way for the expansion, through the work of one man, of a provincial sect into a cosmopolitan religion.

If Paul conformed to Jewish custom, he was about fourteen years of age when he began his studies in Jerusalem. "How I lived from my youth up among my own nation and at Jerusalem," he says, "all that early career of mine, is known to all the Jews." [1] These early years must have been a period of exacting discipline: "As a Pharisee, I lived by the principles of the strictest party in our religion." [2] Memorizing of the text of the Old Testament and of commentaries on that text; reciting the approved interpretations; allegorizing the history, so that external events were transmuted into spiritual lessons,—all these ingenious devices for disguising history and exalting tradition must have been appropriated by the receptive mind of the growing boy. From this early training Paul never entirely emancipated himself. History, even the history of the life of Jesus, never had the

[1] Acts xxvi. 4. [2] Acts xxvi. 5.

first place in his mind. Allegory remained with him a convincing form of argument. Sarah and Hagar are "two covenants," "which things are an allegory." [1] The rock from which Israel drank [2] was Christ.[3] It was a long and painful road which a mind thus instructed must travel before it could reach what Paul later describes as "a single devotion to Christ." [4]

The circumstances of Saul's life in Jerusalem would appear to have been those of ease and culture. His Roman citizenship set him above the general condition of the Jews, while his training for a trade, far from reducing him to the artisan class, was accepted as essential in the education of a prospective rabbi.[5] There is no record of these formative years, but it may be assumed that they were occupied with the ordinary routine of a student, "in all the strictness of our ancestral Law." [6] Not

[1] Gal. iv. 24 A. V. [2] Ex. xvii. 4–7; Num. xx. 6–13.
[3] I Cor. x. 4. [4] II Cor. xi. 3.

[5] Schürer, "Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes," 3te Aufl., II. s. 318: "It is written in the Mishna, 'If any one takes pay for a judicial decision, his sentence is void.' The rabbis were, therefore, dependent on other sources for their livelihood. Many had property of their own; others followed a trade in addition to the study of the Law. Rabban Gamaliel III., son of R. Judah ha-Nasi, especially commends the combination of the study of the Law with civil occupation, 'for employment in both restrains from sin. Study of the Law without business activity must at last be interrupted, and leads to transgression.' The Apostle Paul, it is well known, followed a trade while a preacher of the Gospel, and the same is recorded of many rabbis."

[6] Acts xxii. 3.

until the first disciples of Jesus had recovered from the shock of their Master's death and in the assurance of his risen life waited "for what the Father promised," [1] was Paul roused to reflect that the new faith might present a phenomenon of which an educated Jew should take account. The attitude of Gamaliel continued to be that of a detached and kindly tolerance. "If this project or enterprise springs from men, it will collapse; whereas if it really springs from God, you will be unable to put them down." [2] His young pupil was of a less judicial habit of mind. He might be a bigot, but he could not be a neutral. Bred in the "strictest party in our religion," [3] he could not observe with indifference this gathering of "devout Jews from every nation under heaven" [4] in the name of a malefactor whom the Jews themselves had brought to the cross. There were but two conceivable alternatives,—either the humiliating surrender of a scholar's mind to the delusions of these fisher-folk, or else an unsparing opposition to their fanatical claims; and Saul chose the latter. "I once believed it my duty," he said, "indeed actively to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene." [5] No half-way measures could satisfy such a nature. "I persecuted this Way of religion to the death." [6] "When they were put to death, I voted against them." [7]

At this point, Saul was confronted by the death

[1] Acts i. 4.
[2] Acts v. 38, 39.
[3] Acts xxvi. 5.
[4] Acts ii. 5.
[5] Acts xxvi. 9.
[6] Acts xxii. 4.
[7] Acts xxvi. 10.

of Stephen. That young zealot, whose "face shone like the face of an angel," [1] "full of faith and the holy Spirit," [2] had spoken "blasphemy against Moses and God," [3] and "against this holy Place and the Law." [4] He had even arraigned the high priest and his followers as "betrayers and murderers." [5] The young scholar, trained in academic restraint, could not degrade himself by joining the abusive mob; but, on the other hand, he could not, like Gamaliel, stand altogether aside. Stephen had brought his fate upon himself. Nothing could be more suggestive of the consenting looker-on than the casual phrase, "The witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a youth called Saul." [6] He would not stone, but "quite approved of his murder." [7] For the moment, he maintained that poise of judgment which Pilate exhibited in the case of Jesus. "I cannot find anything criminal about him," [8] Pilate said, and then "released the man they wanted . . . and Jesus he handed over to their will." [9] Saul was of another mould. Neutrality was to him both cowardly and self-defeating. Consent to the death of Stephen was participation in the crime. There was but one course for an honest man and that was to take sides. Thereupon the young student threw himself into the attack. He "persecuted the church of God and harried it," [10] shutting up "many of the saints in prison,

[1] Acts vi. 15.
[2] Acts vi. 5.
[3] Acts vi. 11.
[4] Acts vi. 13.
[5] Acts vii. 52 A. V.
[6] Acts vii. 58.
[7] Acts viii. 1; xxii. 20.
[8] Luke xxiii. 4.
[9] Luke xxiii. 25.
[10] Gal. i. 13.

armed with authority from the high priests." [1] His "every breath was a threat of destruction." [2] He pursued the heretics "even to foreign towns," [3] and procured "letters to the synagogues at Damascus empowering him to put any man or woman in chains whom he could find belonging to the Way, and bring them to Jerusalem." [4] The conflict between feeling and logic which reappears throughout the spiritual history of Paul had begun. His convictions drove him to acts from which every fibre of his sensitive nature recoiled. It was for such a man the only way to the light. He must go through this experience, not round it. Saul the persecutor is the forerunner of Paul the apostle.

What happened to Saul, "as he neared Damascus in the course of his journey," [5] has been interpreted in many different ways. Indeed, in its details it is variously interpreted in the three narratives.[6] According to one report, "his fellow-travellers stood speechless, for they heard the voice but they could not see anyone;" [7] according to another report, the same "companions saw the light, but they did not hear the voice of him who talked." [8] In one account it is said that Paul "though his eyes were open could see nothing;" [9] but later the apostle himself, as he recalls the experience, says, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" [10] These varia-

[1] Acts xxvi. 10.

[2] Acts ix. 1, tr. Weymouth, "The New Testament in Modern Speech," 1902.

[3] Acts xxvi. 11. [4] Acts ix. 2. [5] Acts ix. 3.

[6] Acts ix. 3 ff.; xxii. 6 ff.; xxvi. 12 ff. [7] Acts ix. 7.

[8] Acts xxii. 9. [9] Acts ix. 8. [10] I Cor. ix. 1.

tions in the record have encouraged some commentators to indulge in speculations of different degrees of crudity or coarseness. The experience of Paul, it has been suggested, was a dream, a trance, a nightmare, a sunstroke, an epileptic fit. Yet the accounts of this spiritual revolution, though differing in details, are, in their main outlines, not only singularly consistent with each other, but, when taken in connection with Paul's earlier career, become psychologically probable. A young student, scrupulously trained in reverence for the Law, is suddenly confronted by the evidence of amazing serenity and sacrifice in a Christian "witness." Thinking of this, as he goes his way along the Damascus road, he is overwhelmed by the conviction that his zeal has been terribly and humiliatingly mistaken, and that, while he had once believed it his "duty indeed actively to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene," [1] he had been blind to a higher vision and unheeding to an inward voice. Like many a later convert, untutored like Joan of Arc or the peasant girl of Lourdes, royal like Constantine, scholastic like Augustine, worldly like Ignatius Loyola,—the sudden and unanticipated vision of Jesus convinces him of his sin, and in an instant transforms his life.

The marks of such experiences have been enumerated as ineffability, illumination, transiency, passivity.[2] All these characteristics of conversion are

[1] Acts xxvi. 9.

[2] W. James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," 1903, pp. 380 ff.

conspicuous in the event which abruptly revolutionized the life of Paul. From this spiritual crisis the young convert proceeded under the compelling and unrelaxing authority of a new ideal. He "got up from the ground, but though his eyes were open he could see nothing; so they took his hand and led him to Damascus. For three days he remained sightless, he neither ate nor drank." [1] Finally, a disciple called Ananias, who had heard "about all the mischief this man has done to thy saints at Jerusalem," [2] felt himself called of God to the aid of Saul, who was "praying at this very moment," [3] and, entering the house, said to him, " 'Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord, by Jesus who appeared to you on the road, to let you regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.' In a moment something like scales fell from his eyes, he regained his sight, got up and was baptized. Then he took some food and felt strong again. For several days he stayed at Damascus with the disciples. He lost no time in preaching throughout the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God—to the amazement of all his hearers, who said, 'Is this not the man who in Jerusalem harried those who invoke this Name, the man who came here for the express purpose of carrying them all in chains to the high priests?'" [4] Here was a new type of disciple, an educated gentleman, a Roman citizen, a man of the world, who had renounced everything which had hitherto seemed to him

[1] Acts ix. 8–9.
[2] Acts ix. 13.
[3] Acts ix. 11.
[4] Acts ix. 17–21.

revealed religion, and counted it all "the veriest refuse" [1] as compared with this faith of a persecuted sect. It is not surprising that "the Jews, after a number of days had elapsed, conspired to make away with him." [2] He had abjured all that was most precious both to his fellow-students and to his teacher, Gamaliel. What seemed to them a stumbling-block had become the corner-stone of his religious life, and on it he was to build a structure of thought whose stability neither he nor those who went about to "make away with him" could foresee.

The first steps taken by the new convert, as he contemplated his unprecedented task, are described in two narratives which in many details are not easily reconciled, but which,—whatever may be the true sequence of events,—are alike in throwing new light on Paul's temperament and character. According to the account given by Paul himself, he did not at first associate himself with the other disciples, but retired to a secluded region which he describes, in a large phrase, as "Arabia." It was a voluntary novitiate, a period of reflection and restraint, during which the truth which he had been so abruptly called to preach might be assimilated and clarified. "Instead of consulting with any human being," he says, "instead of going up to Jerusalem to see those who had been apostles before me, I went off at once to Arabia, and on my return I came back to Damascus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaint-

[1] Phil. iii. 8. [2] Acts ix. 23.

ance of Cephas. I stayed a fortnight with him." [1] At the end of this period of probation, which might seem a sufficient test, a still more prolonged term of seclusion and silence followed. Distrusted or self-distrustful, he "went to the districts of Syria and of Cilicia," where he remained, probably in some modest missionary service, for the astonishing period of ten or more years; being, as he says, "quite unknown to the Christian churches of Judæa; they merely heard that 'our former persecutor is now preaching the faith he once harried.'" [2] It was a period of self-subordination and discipline such as few converts have ever been called to endure, and it was not until the end of these fourteen years of obscurity, and when he was not less than forty years of age, that this distrusted convert asserted his right to undertake important service. He "went up to Jerusalem again, accompanied by Barnabas," and conferred with "the so-called 'authorities,'" [3] "and when they recognized the grace I had been given, then the so-called 'pillars' of the church, James and Cephas and John, gave myself and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Our sphere was to be the Gentiles, theirs the circumcised." [4]

The Apostle Paul is usually regarded as impulsive and precipitate; but here are the marks of a reserve of power and a patient submission to self-discipline which are not without their lessons for modern Christians. The ministry of Jesus

[1] Gal. i. 16–18.
[2] Gal. i. 21–23.
[3] Gal. ii. 1, 6.
[4] Gal. ii. 8–9.

touches the imagination by its brevity. What might he not have done and said and even written, if his life had not been so soon cut off? The adventure of Paul, as thus described by himself, is hardly less appealing through its restraint. Jesus died at about thirty years of age, with the great confession, "It is finished." [1] "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." [2] His chief apostle was able to wait until middle life for his mission to become clarified and sure. The work of Paul, like that of his Master, began in a withdrawal from activity. Each, at the outset of his mission, felt the need of solitary reflection and ripened decision. Saul, like Jesus, wrestled in that wilderness with the devils of ambition and self-display; and when at last his ministry began, it was with something of his Master's reassurance and authority. He had not only fought through his problem, but thought it through; and he returned to active service of the new cause with a plan of campaign which gathered into his teaching all that he had learned of Hebrew tradition, Greek wisdom, and Oriental mythology, and gave a new definition and expansion to the Gospel of Christ. His period of seclusion was a valley of decision in which the day of the Lord was near. By prolonged reflection and gathering determination he was at last prepared for a hitherto unimagined and world-embracing task.

The narrative in the Book of Acts gives a different series of events, but leaves the same impression

[1] John xix. 30. [2] John xvii. 4 A. V.

of persistency and patience. According to this account, Paul, after his conversion, "got to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, unable to believe he was really a disciple;" and when this troublesome brother was dismissed to seclusion, it is recorded, with perhaps unconscious irony, that "all over Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, the church enjoyed peace."[1] It was not permitted, however, to enjoy peace when the energy and initiative of Paul were once released. As the message of the Gospel spread northward from Jerusalem, and the disciples at Antioch were for the first time given the name of Christians, one of the more prominent leaders at Jerusalem, Barnabas, who had already expressed confidence in Paul,[2] was despatched to Antioch, and took with him his less conspicuous companion, "where for a whole year they were the guests of the Church and taught considerable numbers."[3] It was the first step in that vast and daring adventure which through all succeeding generations has allured heroic preachers of the Christian faith; the first expression of the conviction that the Gospel was given, not for the comfort of a chosen people alone, but for the spiritual renewal of a waiting world.

At the end of a year at Antioch, according to this report, the missionary enterprise there begun reacted, as has so often occurred in the history of missions, on the churches at home, and those who had been sent to foreign parts returned with

[1] Acts ix. 26, 31. [2] Acts ix. 27. [3] Acts xi. 26.

a larger conception of their faith to the centre of authority. It happened that a famine threatened the brethren at Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas came thither, bearing relief from the more prosperous region about Antioch;[1] and, "after fulfilling their commission" returned to Antioch "bringing with them John, who is surnamed Mark."[2] There, "after fasting and praying," certain "prophets and teachers" "laid their hands on them and let them go," and "they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus."[3] "When the two men started out," it has been remarked, "it was Barnabas and Paul; when they returned, it was Paul and Barnabas."[4]

Such was the beginning of the first considerable journey undertaken by "Commissioners for Foreign Missions." It covered the chief towns of Cyprus and southern Galatia, and the two preachers made their first appeal in the established synagogues of their earlier faith. They were met, however, by angry hostility. It was the often-repeated story of obstructive ecclesiasticism and stagnating orthodoxy. If, it was argued, the disciples of Jesus were Jews, they must teach the ancient doctrines; if, on the other hand, they were not Jews, nothing which they taught deserved a hearing. At Iconium, "there was a hostile movement to insult and stone them."[5] At Lystra, the Jews, "after

[1] Acts xi. 30. [2] Acts xii. 25. [3] Acts xiii. 1, 3, 4.

[4] W. L. Phelps, "Reading the Bible," 1919, p. 53. *Cf.* Acts xi. 30; xiii. 43, 46; but note, also, Acts xv. 12.

[5] Acts xiv. 5.

pelting Paul with stones, ... dragged him outside the town, thinking he was dead." [1] At the close of this perilous ministry, the two evangelists, who had already been deserted by their companion Mark, returned to Antioch, and "reported how God had been with them," and " what he had done." [2] Then, on hearing that much scepticism prevailed among the brethren at Jerusalem concerning the free gospel which they had preached to uncircumcised Gentiles, they proceeded thither for a conference, the significance of which is indicated by the long and detailed report of it preserved in the Book of Acts.[3] It was the first crisis which the expanding brotherhood had been called to meet. Must one who would be a Christian first become a Jew? Was the rite of circumcision a prerequisite for fellowship in Christ? Much might be urged in defence of the conservative view. It was a Jew whom the new brotherhood commemorated, and it was as a Jewish sect that it had grown. What right had Paul and Barnabas to preach a gospel of the Open Door?

It was the first of many controversies among Christians between logic and life, between form and content, between the letter and the spirit, and on its decision depended in large part the destiny of the Christian religion. Was that religion to be circumscribed by ceremonialism, tradition, and conformity, or was it to be God's gift to every receptive life; so that, as Peter, according to this account, finally urged, "in cleansing their hearts by faith

[1] Acts xiv. 19. [2] Acts xiv. 27. [3] Acts xv. 6–29.

he made not the slightest distinction between us and them" ? [1] The same issue has been repeatedly raised in the long and weary history of ecclesiastical domination and sectarian claims; and Paul himself, by the irony of history, has been often misinterpreted as the apostle of a restricted orthodoxy. Yet the conference at Jerusalem would seem to be a conclusive protest against all these limitations of the grace of God. Christian liberalism had its original and sufficient justification when, after "a keen controversy," [2] it was finally determined that the brethren at Jerusalem "ought not to put fresh difficulties in the way of those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles." [3] Thereupon "the apostles and the presbyters, together with the whole church, decided to select some of their number and send them with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch." [4]

Fortified by this endorsement, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord." [5] Then, "some days later, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Come and let us go back to visit the brothers in every town where we have

[1] Acts xv. 9. [2] Acts xv. 7. [3] Acts xv. 19.

[4] Acts xv. 22.

The serious difficulty of reconciling the two accounts of this conference (Acts xv. and Gal. ii.) is elaborately examined by Lake ("Earlier Epistles," pp. 281 ff.). The alternative is to place the interview of Gal. ii. at the time of Paul's visit with famine relief in Acts xi. "My own view is that the objections to placing Gal. ii. at the time of the famine are much the less serious, but I recognize that they are real."

[5] Acts xv. 35.

proclaimed the word of the Lord. Let us see how they are doing;'" [1] and a second missionary journey was planned. A personal difference, however, which throws some light on the character of both, here parted the two colleagues. Barnabas proposed to take with him the same Mark who had before deserted the mission; but "Paul held they should not take a man with them who had deserted them in Pamphylia, instead of accompanying them on active service." [2] A man who had once failed them should not, he thought, be trusted again. Paul's judgment of others was as rigid as the judgment he passed on his own defects or sins. "So in irritation they parted company, Barnabas taking Mark with him and sailing for Cyprus, while Paul selected Silas and went off. . . . He made his way through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches." [3]

The eyes of the world, in the course of the vast war which has devastated Europe in the twentieth Christian century, have been again turned to this very region through which Paul made his strategic advance. From the Dardanelles to Athens, this coast has been rediscovered by thousands of eager inquirers, tracing on their maps the tragic records of the Gallipoli campaign. Along this shore, by sea and land, Paul journeyed, until at length he reached Athens itself. There, at first, "he argued in the synagogue with the Jews," [4] but soon encountered "some of the Epicurean and

[1] Acts xv. 36.
[2] Acts xv. 38.
[3] Acts xv. 39–41.
[4] Acts xvii. 17.

Stoic philosophers," [1] and his greatest oratorical opportunity arrived. Standing in the presence of the monuments of Greek worship, with candor softened by courtesy he pointed to the shrines of the Acropolis, and with consummate rhetorical skill cited the poets of Greece to confirm his message and endorse his claim. It was the perfect type of missionary discourse addressed to cultivated hearers, tolerant yet discerning, ingenious yet restrained, and adding even a touch of playful irony in the great appeal: "Well, I proclaim to you what you worship in your ignorance." [2] From Athens Paul proceeded to Corinth, where he remained more than a year, returning at last by way of Ephesus and Cæsarea to Antioch, to meet the brethren once more.

So extended and venturesome a journey as he had now accomplished would seem enough to satisfy missionary zeal; but it had in fact only spurred the indefatigable Paul to attempt another campaign. After spending some time in the centres of Christian fellowship, he set forth again, with undiminished energy, to revisit the churches of Asia, proceeding as far as Corinth, and remaining for two years or more at Ephesus. There the Quixotic hope revived in him that he might reach even the Imperial City, and he purposed to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I get there . . . ., I must also visit Rome." [3] The hope was fulfilled, but in a manner far from that which he thus con-

[1] Acts xvii. 18. [2] Acts xvii. 23.
[3] Acts xix. 21. *Cf.* Rom. xv. 23 ff.

fidently planned. No sooner did he reach Jerusalem than he found himself, as many a returning missionary has done, involved in the controversies of legalism and orthodoxy whose lingering vitality he, in his larger work, had almost forgotten. For the sake of peace, he even submitted himself to the Jewish ritual of purification;[1] but the "Asiatic Jews," who had been aware in the missionary field itself of Paul's radical liberalism, "catching sight of him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd and laid hands on him."[2] Roman soldiers were summoned to rescue Paul from the mob; and he was finally sent under guard to the Governor at Cæsarea. There, after being detained two years, he demanded that as a Roman citizen he should be tried at Rome itself; and Festus, the Governor, answered, "You have appealed to Cæsar? Very well, you must go to Cæsar!"[3] Even the authority of Herod Agrippa, the second of that name to rule with the title of King, could not deny this proud right of a Roman. "'He might have been released,' said Agrippa to Festus, 'if he had not appealed to Cæsar.'"[4] Not as a missionary, therefore, but as a prisoner under indictment, not in chains but under guard, Paul set out on that journey of which he had dreamed as the climax of his career; and by the strange course of judicial appeal was able to reach the goal which by the way of missionary adventure he might never have seen.

[1] Acts xxi. 26.
[2] Acts xxi. 27.
[3] Acts xxv. 12.
[4] Acts xxvi. 32.

The eventful voyage which followed, with its many perils and final shipwreck, is described with graphic detail in the narrative of the Book of Acts; and the story remains, both as a dramatic unity and as a technical record, the delight of all who love a tale of the sea.[1] The soundings in fathoms, the launching of the boat by treacherous seamen, the cutting of her rope "to let her fall off," the grounding of the vessel after her crew had "hoisted the foresail to the breeze, and headed for the beach;" the peremptory order for "those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land, while the rest were to manage with planks or pieces of wreckage; "—all this not only exhibits Paul as a moral hero, but has the genuine flavor of a mariner's log. To Rome at last, then, through the many vicissitudes of a protracted journey, the traveller came, and there he "got permission to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him," [2] and dwelt, we are told, for two years "in his private lodging, welcoming anyone who came to visit him; he preached the Reign of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unmolested." [3]

At this point, history becomes silent, and the story of Paul's trial and of his last days is left for pious tradition to report. That during this mild captivity he wrote the touching letters to the Philippians and the Colossians appears probable from their contents; and the less assured letter to the Ephesians bears something of the same mark.

[1] Acts xxvii. 27–44. [2] Acts xxviii. 16. [3] Acts xxviii. 30–31.

Whether he was finally set free, and fulfilled the intention announced in his letter to the Romans, "I have had a longing to visit you whenever I went to Spain, I am hoping to see you on my way there," [1] and again, "Well, once I finish this business. . . . I will start for Spain and take you on the way;" [2] whether, returning from Spain, he was re-arrested, accused with other Christians of the burning of Rome, tried, condemned, and beheaded,—all this is for the historical imagination, fortified by early tradition and by intrinsic probability, to determine.[3]

The great Basilica of St. Paul (S. Paolo fuori le Mura), on the road to the port of Ostia, stands not far from the spot where, according to various historians, he was buried; [4] and the Church of the Three Fountains (S. Paolo alle tre Fontane), on the supposed site of martyrdom, perpetuates the beautiful tradition that as his head in falling struck three times upon the ground, three streams

[1] Rom. xv. 23, 24. [2] Rom. xv. 28.

[3] Clement of Rome i. 5: "Paul, after preaching both in the East and West . . . suffered martyrdom under the prefects." Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* ii. 25. "Likewise, a certain ecclesiastical author, Caius by name, who was born about the time of Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, . . . gives the following statement respecting the place where the earthly tabernacles of the aforesaid Apostles are laid: 'But I can show you,' says he, 'the trophies of the Apostles; for if you will go to the Vatican, or to the Ostian Road, you will find the trophies of those who have laid the foundation of this Church."

[4] Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ch. V., "Hic ergo quarto decimo Neronis anno (eodem die quo Petrus) Romæ pro Christo capite truncatur sepultusque est in via Ostiensi."

of water rose.[1] "His tomb," it has been suggestively said, "is beneath 'St. Paul's without the Walls'; and in spite of the mighty impression he made in his own day, in spite of the veneration of his name, for the bulk of the Christian Church, this passionate champion of a religion, free, personal, and ethical remains 'outside the walls'. It is for those who can never satisfy themselves with institutional or legal religion that he has in every age a message." [2]

Such, in brief, were the most significant events of this adventurous life. Those who are primarily interested in meditative or æsthetic types of character may find something lacking in the story of Paul. Those, on the other hand, who appreciate the man of action—and these are the great majority of modern readers—may turn to Paul with a sense of affinity and fellowship which they cannot claim in recalling his unperturbed and meditative Master. Augustine, in his "little garden" at Milan, hears "a voice as of a boy or girl often repeating, 'Take up and read,'" and, as he says, "grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision

[1] Acta Sanctorum, June, vii. 33: "Abscisso autem Pauli capite triplici saltu sese sustollente tres statim perennis aquæ fontes emersere quam religionis ergo hodie potamus."

[2] C. Harold Dodd, "The Meaning of Paul for Today," 1920, p. 29.

for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.' No further would I read," he says, "nor did I need, for instantly, as the sentence ended, by a light as it were of security infused into my heart, all the gloom of doubt vanished away." [1] Luther, according to his son Paul, is offering his *preces graduales* on the Scala Santa at Rome, when suddenly there comes to his mind the saying of the prophet Habakkuk which Paul had cited,[2] "The just shall live by their faith," and forthwith a new conviction possesses his mind.[3] John Wesley writes in his Journal, on May 24, 1738, "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans . . . I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." [4]

What other figure in history is so many-sided, so masterful, so modern, as this untiring traveller, this persuasive orator, this subtle reasoner, this indomitable, fearless, enduring man? His catalogue of adventures is that of an explorer rather than of a

[1] "Confessions," Book XII.

[2] Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17.

[3] J. Köstlin, "Martin Luther," 1883, i. 105. The edition of 1903, ed. Kawerau, regards the story as of doubtful authority, the record being made thirty-eight years after the event. *Cf.* Preserved Smith, "Life and Letters of Martin Luther," 1911, p. 19.

[4] C. T. Winchester, "The Life of John Wesley," 1906, p. 57.

saint. "Three times I have been beaten by the Romans, once pelted with stones, three times shipwrecked, adrift at sea for a whole night and day; I have been often on my travels, I have been in danger from rivers and robbers, in danger from Jews and Gentiles, through dangers of town and of desert, through dangers on the sea, through dangers among false brothers—through labour and hardship, through many a sleepless night, through hunger and thirst, starving many a time, cold and ill-clad, and all the rest of it." [1] Yet these external vicissitudes were, after all, only incidental in the experience of Paul. Within this scene of travel, hardship and danger the real drama of his spiritual conflict moved. The shipwreck at sea was but a symbol of the shipwreck of his inherited faith, from which, as if on "pieces of wreckage," he reached firm shore. "A night and a day in the deep" were a less perilous venture than the long struggle, like that of a panting swimmer, among the waves of discouragement and doubt. The spiritual history of Paul has brought him near to multitudes of human lives in their own experiences of contrition, illumination, and assurance, and has made him the kind of saint which the modern world can recognize and revere. His missionary journeys were not along the coast of the Ægean alone, but across the uncharted seas of human sin and hope.

[1] II Cor. xi. 25–27.

CHAPTER III

THE LETTERS

When one passes from a brief review of the story of Paul the man, and proceeds to examine his letters, one is immediately confronted by the difficulty of reading these letters as they were meant to be read. Such letters are sadly misconceived when studied as theological treatises, or revered as inspired oracles. They were written for immediate purposes or dictated to an amanuensis, and were addressed, as occasion demanded, to special churches or individuals where advice was desired, or where the writer's authority had been questioned or opposed. Several letters of Paul seem to have been lost, and others are "messages which would have been delivered orally had the apostle been present; and St. Paul would probably not have cared much to preserve them." [1] Affection and indignation, the correction of misunderstandings and the expression of indignant protest, succeed each other without logical order, as the writer's mood may suggest. Rules about food, irreverence at the Lord's Supper, doctrinal controversies, are discussed in quick succession and with equal vigor. The manner is at times so

[1] W. R. Inge, "Outspoken Essays," 1919, p. 207.

vehement that a sentence is left unfinished while the writer hurries to a new thought.[1] Tenderness, reproof, exhortation, affectionate greetings, hastily succeed each other as each letter ends.

This unstudied abruptness makes large demands on the modern reader. To understand such letters and their allusions, one must appreciate, not only what the temporary issues were, but what kind of man was writing about them. In other words, the interpretation of the letters presupposes both historical and psychological preparedness. Many of the subjects discussed, while entirely familiar both to the writer and to those addressed, have become remote, or even unintelligible. In a study of the Pauline Epistles of striking originality and insight, the philosopher John Locke, two centuries ago, called attention to this elusive character of epistolary evidence. "The matters that St. Paul writ about were certainly things well known to those he writ to, and which they had some peculiar concern in; which made them easily apprehend his meaning and see the tendency and force of his discourse. But we having now, at this distance, no information of the occasion of his writing, little or no knowledge of the temper and circumstances those he writ to were in, but what is to be gathered out of the epistles themselves, it is not strange that many things in them lie concealed to us, which, no doubt, they that were concerned in the letter, under-

[1] "Est ex vehementia loquendi imperfecta et suspensa sententia." Colet, cited by Seebohm, "The Oxford Reformers," ed. 1913, p. 34, note.

stood at first sight." [1] Still further, a letter not infrequently assumes earlier correspondence, and may allude to matters already discussed either by one's self or by another. Thus, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul says, "In my letter I wrote," [2] and the "attractive guess" has been ventured that fragments of this lost letter are imbedded in the text of the existing Epistles.[3]

Nor is this the only difficulty which confronts the modern reader; for these letters, not always easy to understand in themselves, require also for their interpretation, like other letters, an understanding of the circumstances and motives which prompted the writer. The style varies with Paul's mood or theme; he is now harsh and now tender; at one moment passionate and at another forgiving. Humility alternates with pride. A letter may begin with a subtle philosophy of religion and end with the most intimate and personal counsel; or the thought may rise from one level to another, as Paul reflects on his theme; or, yet again, beginning with self-explanation or self-defence, a letter may rise to heights of vision and breadth of horizon, to descend finally to the more familiar level of affectionate greeting or farewell. Each letter is thus like the journey of a traveller along the hills and valleys of experience, yet a

[1] "The Works of John Locke," 9th Ed. 1794, VII. iv. "An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles by consulting St. Paul himself."

[2] I Cor. v. 9.

[3] Lake, "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 123.

journey undertaken as a predetermined march toward a definite end. Those to whom such letters were addressed were familiar with this impetuous personality and made due allowance for his varying or inconsistent manner of speech; but a later generation, reverently examining each paragraph as of equal authority, and reading as an act of worship what was written in the unguarded language of an intimate friend, may give disproportionate emphasis to incidental phrases or ideas.

Paul is often described as obscure; but this impression is, as a rule, the result of reading a letter as though it were a treatise. A letter-writer may permit himself rapid transitions and informal conciseness. His pace of expression may be quickened because the correspondents understand the intervening thought. An intimation or reminiscence may be equivalent to an argument. It may not, indeed, be easy to follow a teacher who ascends so boldly to the heights of his reasoning, or descends so confidently to explain the profoundest mysteries of God's ways with men; yet to one who cares for these great adventures of the spirit, Paul is never a guide who has lost his way; he knows his path and walks with a firm step. The difficulty in accompanying him occurs, first, through the nature of the region, and, second, through the swiftness of the pace. "I think," continues John Locke, "that there is not anywhere to be found a more pertinent, close arguer who has his eye always on the mark he drives at. . . . I do not say that he is everywhere clear in his expressions to us now, but

I do say that he is everywhere a coherent, pertinent writer." It is with the letters of Paul somewhat as with the poetry of Robert Browning. What seems to be obscurity is often in reality speed. The sluggish reader is left behind by the agility of the thought. The argument must be brought down while on the wing.

Here, then, is a curious situation. The character of Paul must be rediscovered through his letters, yet the letters become intelligible only as one in some degree understands Paul. A letter which was originally a candid disclosure of the writer's mind may be misinterpreted when detached from its environment of time and thought; and a person who to his contemporaries was singularly accessible may be transformed by mistaken reverence or ingenious criticism into an oracle or a sophist. Much study of the Pauline Epistles has been fruitless because they have been approached as theological tracts; and much study of Paul himself has assumed him to be a consistent philosopher, when, in fact, his maturing mind was from time to time expressing as best it could the ideals and desires which had thus far claimed his devotion. The modern reader, looking for consistency or uniformity, finds himself watching a hurrying river of expression, which sweeps on with recurrent eddies and enlarging stream. Fixity and invariability are not easy to discover in a writer whose aim is momentum and power. One is watching theology in the making, a mind in motion, a style which leaps at transitions and delights in para-

doxes. Freedom and predestination, justice and mercy, the resurrection of the body and the continuity of the spirit, the man Jesus and the eternal Christ,—these apparently divergent conceptions are swept into the current of Paul's thought, or swell its volume as from side-channels of reflection. His practical counsels exhibit the same variation in emphasis and tone. Humility and self-assertion, the sense of weakness and the authority of a master, abruptly succeed each other. "I am," he says, "unfit to bear the name of apostle;" [1] yet "I am not one whit inferior to these precious 'apostles.'" [2] "Let them vaunt as they please, I am equal to them (mind, this is the rôle of a fool!)." [3] Yet, with not less emphasis, he writes, "It was in weakness and fear and with great trembling that I visited you." [4]

The difficulties which thus meet the modern reader of such letters are, however, not without compensations, and may reassure rather than discourage him. They indicate that this familiar and intimate correspondence was primarily addressed, not to theologians who would demand consistency and precision, but to congregations of plain people among the immediate needs of practical life. If this was the audience to which the letters were addressed, it would appear probable that their main intention may be discovered, not exclusively by scholars, but in some degree by readers of the same uninstructed type to-day.

[1] I Cor. xv. 9.
[2] II Cor. xi. 5.
[3] II Cor. xi. 21.
[4] I Cor. ii. 3.

There are, no doubt, many allusions and discriminations which demand much learning for their interpretation. One may concur in the conclusion of early readers of Paul's letters, that "our beloved brother Paul has written . . . letters containing some knotty points, which ignorant and unsteady souls twist (as they do the rest of the scriptures) to their own destruction." [1] Yet he would be a most incompetent letter-writer who did not make unmistakably plain, even to a casual reader, what he regarded as most essential to communicate. A letter from a friend to a friend would seem to demand for its reading little more than a reasonable degree of intelligence, and some understanding of the circumstances or problems which the writer had in mind.

These considerations may encourage one who applies himself, not to investigate every corner of Paul's mind, but to discover what, on the whole, the apostle wanted most definitely to teach. Something may be missed of the finer discriminations or by-products of the apostle's thought, but one may at least read the letters as they were meant to be read, cursorily and continuously, as the plain people heard them for whose sakes they were dictated or composed. Here are nine or ten letters, written in obvious haste, and often with passionate heat; concerned, as letters usually are, with matters of contemporary interest, recalling questions asked in earlier cor-

[1] II Pet. iii. 15, 16.

respondence, reiterating instructions which had been orally given or conveyed in earlier letters, deploring quarrels, rebuking disloyalty, challenging criticism, expressing affection. They are the lavish outpouring of a vigorous mind and a sensitive heart, with all the marks of spontaneity, precipitancy and intimacy. Great propositions concerning God and man are thrown off as Paul proceeds, as from a mind surcharged with electric energy; but the correspondence as a whole is conversational, hortatory, self-explanatory, affectionate. "The truth is," as a most competent scholar has lately affirmed, "that Paul cannot be placed under any of the ordinary categories. . . We have to keep in view, on the one hand, the artless and occasional character of Paul's letters, and, on the other, their claim . . . to be the medium of a Gospel, a redeeming message, which has a right to challenge attention and obedience." [1] To wrest such documents from their environment and set them in the vacuum of infallibility, is to miss the atmosphere of reality which they breathe, and in the pious attempt to give them universal authority to leave unobserved the characteristics which originally gave them authority and force. May we not, then, as a discerning English scholar has suggested, "venture to cast aside extreme timidity, and to read the letters of Paul as we read those of Cicero, more in the light of an historical imagina-

[1] H. A. A. Kennedy, "The Theology of the Epistles," 1920, pp. 4, 5.

tion and of spiritual sympathy than in a purely critical spirit?" [1]

These considerations encourage the reëxamination of Paul's letters by those who cannot claim specialized qualification as exegetical or philosophical scholars; and it is a curious fact that in the vast library of expositions and commentaries concerned with the letters of Paul permanent vitality has been secured quite as much by observations like those of the philosopher of common sense, John Locke, and those of the apostle of culture, Matthew Arnold, as by many researches of theological experts. In an illuminating passage of Goethe's autobiography, he gives his approval to this appreciation of literature in general and of the Bible in particular. "In all that we receive by tradition," he says, "especially by written tradition, the fundamental problem is to discover the inner meaning and intention of the work. Here is the original, divine, effective, unimpeachable, and imperishable part, against which time and external conditions are as powerless as bodily sickness is powerless against a well-disciplined soul. . . . To explore this inner and specific character of a writing which thus appeals to us is practicable for any one. First of all one must ask himself how it affects his own inner life and how far its vitality stirs and fructifies his own. All that is external for oneself or doubtful in itself may be left to the critics, who, though they may be able to dismember and divide, cannot rob one of

[1] Percy Gardner, "The Religious Experience of Saint Paul," 1911, p. 1.

that inner meaning to which he clings, or even for a moment make one lose the assurance he has found. . . . Through this principle, the Bible became to me for the first time interpretable. . . . The New Testament was not immune from my inquiries; I did not spare it my passion for analysis; but my affection and inclination accepted the maxim: 'The Gospel writers may contradict each other, so long as the Gospel does not contradict itself.'" [1]

What, then, one proceeds to ask, may be observed by the untutored mind of a modern reader as the dominating purpose of these vigorous and intimate letters? To answer this question, one must briefly review the course of Paul's correspondence, and note, so far as is practicable, the general impression which each letter conveys. Many problems of criticism may be left unconsidered and many details of interpretation undetermined, while, with such directness and candor as one can command, the reader looks for the apostle's main intention, as it is disclosed among the multifarious discussions and incidental instructions which express his indefatigable mind. What is there that is temporary, and what remains that is timeless in

[1] "Aus meinem Leben," 12te Buch, "Werke," Berlin, 1872, XV. s. 64. The reappearance of the same view in Coleridge may suggest something more than a coincidence: "In the Bible, there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit." "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," 1853, p. 47.

the letters of Paul? What does Paul teach which the modern world may profitably hear?

One may begin such a survey with the two letters to the Thessalonians,—the earliest, it is generally agreed, in chronological sequence. Why did the apostle write as he did? What prompted him to write at all? What would have seemed to him an appropriate reply to these letters? What form of approval or loyalty did he seek? The answer to these questions may be somewhat embarrassed by critical doubts concerning the second letter. A difference of tone becomes there perceptible, and the affectionate confidence of the first letter is in sharp contrast with the severer and more official style of the second. It has even been argued that the two letters could not have been written by the same person to the same church.[1] When, however, one recalls the impetuous character which the apostle everywhere exhibits, it may not be unreasonable to believe that a letter of censure might quickly follow a letter of love, and that the second letter was addressed to a less loyal, or more Jewish, section within the Thessalonian Church. As John Colet observed in 1496, "Paul tempers his speech with a rare prudence and art and, as it were, balances his word as addressed to Jews and Gentiles." [2]

[1] See the discussion in Lake, "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," 1911: "There is sufficient justification for accepting the Epistle as a genuine document belonging, together with I Thessalonians, even if not so certainly, to the earliest period of Christian life in Thessalonica," p. 86.

[2] Seebohm, "The Oxford Reformers," ed. 1913, p. 34, note.

Accepting, then, both letters as authentic, what may one conclude to be their dominating aim? Paul, as elsewhere reported, had taught for some time in Thessalonica,[1] and later had sent Timothy thither from Athens to see how matters fared among the converts. The report of this mission now prompts Paul to write without delay. "When Timotheus," he says, "reached me a moment ago on his return from you, bringing me the good news of your faith and love and of how you always remember me kindly, longing to see me as I long to see you, then, amid all my own distress and trouble, I was cheered—this faith of yours encouraged me." [2] He writes, it would appear, first to the Greek Christians in Thessalonica, and then to their brethren who still cling to Jewish forms, appealing first to one group and then to the other for a more consistent loyalty.

What does he say that has more than local or temporary importance? One must frankly answer that little of such material is to be found. In the first letter, it is true, Paul interrupts his instructions to offer some bold speculations on the condition of disciples who are "asleep in death," [3] and to affirm that "the dead in Christ will rise first; then we the living, who survive, will be caught up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air;" [4] and in the second letter he returns to the same daring prophecies, as though his first statement had been either insufficient or mis-

[1] Acts xvii. 1–10.
[2] I Thess. iii. 6–7.
[3] I Thess. iv. 13.
[4] I Thess. iv. 16–17.

understood.[1] The first passage applies to the new religion the fantastic eschatology of Hebrew tradition; the second amplifies that teaching by the still more fanciful doctrine of an intervening rule of Antichrist, "whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his lips." [2] We may infer, according to Timothy's report, that there was much concern in Thessalonica about the "Day of the Lord," [3] or what has been called "an eschatolological restlessness," [4] which Paul attempts to calm by applying the rabbinical tradition in which he had been trained; but only the crudest literalism can find in these bold imaginings a permanent significance. Neither the splendid figure of the Lord descending "from heaven with a loud summons," [5] nor the "lurid picture" [6] of the Son of Perdition, can be of practical assistance to a modern mind in interpreting the mystery of life and death. Both passages, as "curiosities of obsolete Jewish thought," suggest the early place of these letters among the writings of Paul. In both, the new faith has hardly detached itself from the background against which it was soon to be sharply defined.[7]

With the exception of these passages, the two letters to the Thessalonians are in the main con-

[1] II Thess. ii. 1–12. [2] II Thess. ii. 8. [3] II Thess. ii. 2.

[4] B. W. Bacon, "The Story of St. Paul," 1904, p. 251.

[5] I Thess. iv. 16.

[6] Bacon, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

[7] Jacoby, "Neutestamentliche Ethik," 1899, s. 243: "The letters to the Thessalonians show hardly a trace of that special conception of Christian conduct which distinguishes Paul from the other New Testament writers."

cerned with immediate affairs and personal counsels. The first is a message of parental affection mingled with self-defence. "We always thank God for you all." [1] "You are witnesses, and so is God, to our behaviour among you believers, how pious and upright and blameless it was." [2] The second letter is a sterner demand that the church should justify the teacher's pride. "Stand firm and hold to the rules which you have learned from us orally or by letter." [3] "If anyone will not obey our orders in this letter, mark that man, do not associate with him." [4] Both letters end with special counsels,—the one against impurity, the other against indolence,—and the latter warning is reënforced by the writer's example of self-respecting industry. "For you know quite well how to copy us; we did not loaf in your midst, we did not take free meals from anyone; no, toiling hard at our trade, we worked night and day, so as not to be a burden to any of you." [5] "But we are informed that some of your number are loafing, busy-bodies instead of busy. . . . We charge and exhort such persons to keep quiet, to do their work and earn their own living." [6] How intimate and familiar all this is! How genuine and cordial are the salutations which follow, written by Paul's own hand, "a mark," he says, "in every letter of mine!" [7] These spontaneous utterances of parental solicitude are permanently precious, not as parts of a treatise on

[1] I Thess. i. 2.
[2] I Thess. ii. 10.
[3] II Thess. ii. 15.
[4] II Thess. iii. 14.
[5] II Thess. iii. 7–8.
[6] II Thess. iii. 11, 12.
[7] II Thess. iii. 17.

rabbinical eschatology, but as the counsel of a resolute but loving friend, and perennially instructive, not so much for their speculations concerning the "arrival of the Lord Jesus and our muster before him," [1] as for the sanity and sagacity of their practical religion. "Keep a check upon loafers;" "Never lose your temper with anyone;" "Never give up prayer;" "Thank God for everything;" [2] "Never grow tired of doing what is right;" [3]— these admonitions have their permanent place in the history of ethics, while the fervid anticipation that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be "revealed from heaven together with the angels of his power in flaming fire," [4] remains of interest only to whose who care to trace the origin of such a conception, or who still wait for this dread appearing.

When one passes from the letters to the Thessalonians to the letter addressed to the Galatians, and proceeds in the same manner to review it, as one might read again a letter lately received, asking what the writer had most in mind to communicate, one finds little difficulty in observing its positive and reiterated aim. Fortunately for the modern readers, there is prefixed to the main argument a paragraph of self-defence, designed to justify what he is later to say. This apology is the most authentic record of Paul's turbulent career; and it is highly characteristic of his precipitate manner that this precious fragment of autobiography

[1] II Thess. ii. 1.
[2] I Thess. v. 14–17.
[3] II Thess. iii. 13.
[4] II Thess. i. 7, 8.

should introduce a letter written for quite another purpose, and should break off as abruptly as it begins: "You know," he says, "the story of my past career," [1] and forthwith he proceeds to recount that story, and to claim the authority which it justifies. "I am writing you the sheer truth, I swear it before God!" [2]

Armed with this sense of complete authority, Paul vigorously and indignantly announces his purpose. "The business of the letter," as John Locke with singular directness and sanity stated it, "is to dehort and hinder the Galatians from bringing themselves under the bondage of the Mosaical law." [3] News has come to Paul in Corinth that certain Judaizing brethren in Galatia are protesting against his teaching as lax and unsound, and are insisting that he is no genuine apostle. This opposition rouses Paul to a counter-attack, and, without preamble or qualification, he communicates his instructions as "an apostle—not appointed by men nor commissioned by any man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." [4] "I am astonished," he sternly writes, "you are hastily shifting like this. . . . It simply means that certain individuals are unsettling you." [5] "O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you?" "Are you such fools? Did you begin with the Spirit only to end now with the flesh? Have you had all that experience for nothing?" [6] "I tell you, if you get circumcised, Christ will be of no use

[1] Gal. i. 13.
[2] Gal. i. 20.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 27.
[4] Gal. i. 1.
[5] Gal. i. 6, 7.
[6] Gal. iii. 1, 3, 4.

to you." [1] "Make a firm stand then, do not slip into any yoke of servitude." [2] In this tempestuous spirit, Paul proceeds to commend his message by two characteristic arguments,—first, by an appeal to his own experience,[3] and, secondly, by an allegory from the Old Testament.[4] Finally, his affection for the community in Galatia quite overcomes his passionate indignation, and he concludes with gentler admonitions: "As we live by the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit." [5] In short, the letter is obviously written to warn converts against the restrictions of Jewish ceremonial, and to assure them that they have the rights, not of servants, but of sons.[6] As in many a modern letter, this underlying purpose is disclosed most definitely in a postscript. After what seems a conclusion, and even a signature in the "big letters" of his own hand, the apostle breaks out once more in denunciation: "These men," he says, "who are keen upon you getting circumcised are just men who want to make a grand display in the flesh. . . . They merely want you to get circumcised so as to boast over your flesh! But no boasting for me, none except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For what counts is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, it is the new creation." [7]

Thus, the letter to the Galatians is, in its main intention, an indignant defence of Christian liberty, a passionate protest against religious provincialism.

[1] Gal. v. 2.
[2] Gal. v. 1.
[3] Gal. iv. 12 ff.
[4] Gal. iv. 21–31.
[5] Gal. v. 25.
[6] Gal. iv. 1–7.
[7] Gal. vi. 12–15.

Paul is not only a generous friend, but a good hater. He sees his converts shut in by the narrow walls of Jewish tradition, feeling their way along one path of approach to Christian discipleship, through one ceremonial rite to which all must conform, toward one central authority to which all must submit; and over against this limitation of God's grace he sets, with passionate determination, the freedom of God's Spirit. The reactionaries and the unenlightened may hedge the Gospel with Jewish regulations. "There were traitors," Paul says, "of false brothers, who had crept in to spy out the freedom we enjoy in Christ Jesus; they did aim at enslaving us again." [1] Even the "so-called 'pillars' of the church" might "draw back and hold aloof." [2] The message of Paul is of complete emancipation of human life by the spirit of Christ. "But faith has come, and we are wards no longer; you are all sons of God by your faith in Christ Jesus." [3] "There is no room for Jew or Greek, there is no room for slave or freeman, there is no room for male or female." [4] "Only, do not make your freedom an opening for the flesh." [5] The new faith was thus a way of deliverance from religious provincialism into religious cosmopolitanism. It was given, not to create a new Jewish sect, but to begin a new world-order. The laws of Christ's church were not to be imposed from without or from above, but to be inspired from within. Christian liberty is not a gift granted to servants, but a right inherited by

[1] Gal. ii. 4.
[2] Gal. ii. 9, 12.
[3] Gal. iii. 25–26.
[4] Gal. iii. 28.
[5] Gal. v. 13.

sons. "The Jerusalem on high is free, and she is 'our' mother." [1] The letter to the Galatians thus becomes the charter of Christian liberalism.[2] "For the entire Law is summed up in one word, in You must love your neighbour as yourself." [3]

The next step in this cursory survey brings one to the two letters addressed to the church in Corinth; and here one becomes aware of a larger environment and an amplified teaching. The same note of Christian liberty is heard, but it is touched more firmly, as by a teacher who has become more conscious of his own emancipation, and has acquired the confidence of a cosmopolitan mind. Paul had already lived "one year and six months" [4] in Corinth, that great commercial centre which Milman called "the Venice of the Old World;" [5] and had there observed the convergence of various civilizations at this strategic point, and the moral degradation of a great metropolis, with its consequent perils for spiritual religion. He had also received news from "Chloe's people" [6] that there were quarrels among the brethren, and that his own authority was called in question. "By 'quarrelling,'" he says, "I mean that each of you has

[1] Gal. iv. 26.

[2] *Cf.* von Soden, "The History of Early Christian Literature," tr. 1906, p. 70. The Epistle to the Galatians "is the charter of Christianity as a new, a universal religion. . . . All is inward and spiritual, and therefore free." *Cf.* F. E. Hutchinson, "Christian Freedom," 1920, ch. II (with a note on Galatians v. 1).

[3] Gal. v. 14.

[4] Acts xviii. 11.

[5] "The History of Christianity," 1840, II. 20. [6] I Cor. i. 11.

his party-cry."[1] Some had rallied under Paul's name; others had taken the name of Apollos or of Cephas, and still others, in a sectarian spirit, the name of Christ himself. Earlier correspondence had passed between Paul and his converts, and three of the Corinthian brethren had come in person to Ephesus, seeking Paul's advice.[2] The first of the two letters is thus, not primarily a discussion of abstract principles, but the reply of a deeply agitated teacher to these reports of contention and immorality.

First, and with impetuous eloquence, Paul reminds his brethren of that comprehensive faith which it had been his aim to preach, and reproaches them for the ominous signs of Christian sectarianism. "Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to drop these party-cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude."[3] Not as Jews, demanding miracles, should they turn to him, nor yet as Greeks wanting a philosophy, but rather as fellow-disciples of a Gospel which was to the Jews "a stumbling-block," and to the Greeks "sheer folly."[4] "We interpret what is spiritual in spiritual language." "Our thoughts are Christ's thoughts."[5] Was there ever a more stirring recall from the doctrinal controversies which had already begun to divide and alienate Christian brethren to a spiritual interpretation of religion, and to the consciousness of liberty which such an interpreta-

[1] I Cor. i. 12.
[2] I Cor. xvi. 17.
[3] I Cor. i. 10.
[4] I Cor. i. 23.
[5] I Cor. ii. 13, 16.

tion creates? What the Galatian church, in its more limited environment, had already heard of emancipation from the bonds of Judaism, is now applied in larger terms to the wider world of Corinth. These letters are the Magna Charta of Christian cosmopolitanism. Nothing is alien to the Christian if it testifies to "the Spirit and its power." [1] "For all belongs to you; Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present and the future—all belongs to you; and you belong to Christ, and Christ to God." [2]

Having thus reiterated the demand for spiritual liberty already made in the letter to the Galatians, the apostle proceeds to deal with the moral degradation reported to him. He warns his converts against litigiousness [3] and incontinence,[4] and even against incest.[5] He sharply demands that they bear in mind his admonitions. "It was I who in Christ Jesus became your father. . . . Certain individuals have got puffed up, have they? . . . I will come to you before long, if the Lord wills, and then I will find out from these puffed up creatures not what their talk but what their power amounts to." [6] "Expel the wicked from your company." [7] "Shun immorality! . . . Your body is the temple of the holy Spirit within you. . . . Glorify God with your body." [8]

His exhortations enter into many details. Marriage and divorce; the unmarried life and the

[1] I Cor. ii. 4.
[2] I Cor. iii. 21–23.
[3] I Cor. vi. 1.
[4] I Cor. vii. 5 ff.
[5] I Cor. v. 1.
[6] I Cor. iv. 15–19.
[7] I Cor. v. 13.
[8] I Cor. vi. 18–20.

remarriage of widows; marriage outside the Christian connection,—these problems of domestic life, which had so disturbed the Corinthian converts that they had been referred to Paul, are disposed of in his masterful and authoritative manner. Then, with the same abruptness, his style and temper change as he approaches another question,—that of the attitude of converts toward certain superstitious observances which still seemed to many not without merit. Christian liberty, he insists, does not mean intolerance. One may be convinced, yet be considerate. If meat offered to idols seems to weak minds sacred, one should abstain from offending these brethren. "Now mere food will not bring us any nearer to God." [1] "Therefore if food is any hindrance to my brother's welfare, sooner than injure him I will never eat flesh as long as I live, never!" [2] How statesmanlike is this sagacity, and how self-revealing is the allusion to his own conduct of life! "Why, free as I am from all, I have made myself the slave of all, to win over as many as I could." [3] Circumstances change with the passing centuries, and the problems of conduct assume new forms; but the instruction of Paul concerning meat offered to idols remains the permanent principle of Christian toleration: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity,"—such was the rule of Paul.

At this point, the letter rises abruptly from these specific admonitions, and surveys them all from a

[1] I Cor. viii. 8. [2] I Cor. viii. 13. [3] Cor. ix. 19.

higher level as parts of a general view of life. The very language grows richer, becoming lyric rather than didactic; and the fragmentary counsels he has given as practical maxims rise into a sublime hymn of Christian love. "I want you to understand," he says, "about spiritual gifts." [1] "Set your hearts on the higher talents. And yet I will go on to show you a still higher path." [2] The searching verses which follow, more elevated than any passage of the New Testament except the finest utterances of Jesus himself, are not only concerned with the "Greatest Thing in the World," but are doubly precious to each generation of readers, because they are the confession of a teacher who was temperamentally impatient and intolerant. Conscious of his own violent emotions and quick antipathies, and in a letter which abounds in censure and rebuke, the apostle, as he draws to its close, finds a way to rise above these issues and to announce a Law of Love. "Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient." [3] Here is not only one of the most imperishable treasures of literature, but an assurance to hasty and violent natures like that of Paul himself, that there is open, even to them, a "higher path" of humility and self-control.

[1] I Cor. xii. 1. [2] I Cor. xii. 31. [3] I Cor. xiii. 4–7.

With this climax, the letter, if it had been primarily a work of art, might fittingly close; but the unstudied precipitancy of the writer is exhibited in what seems to be an unpremeditated postscript. It is as though, having finished what he had proposed to say, there flooded into his mind other and disconnected matters of which he must disburden himself. No two subjects could seem to be more remote from each other than those which he now approaches,—first, the decorous conduct of worship,[1] and then the gospel of the resurrection;[2] but he writes of each in turn with the abruptness and authority of a master. In the first case, he applies his common sense to the "gift of tongues," which had come to seem a sign of inspired worship, and begs his friends not to "be pouring words into the empty air,"[3] or "to be talking gibberish."[4] "I would rather," he says, "say five words with my own mind for the instruction of other people than ten thousand words in a 'tongue.'"[5] "To sum up, my brothers. Set your heart on the prophetic gift, and do not put any check upon speaking in 'tongues'; but let everything be done decorously and in order."[6]

Concerning his gospel of the resurrection he is not less explicit and authoritative, as though reiterating a teaching already given. "I would have you know the gospel I once preached to you."[7] "I passed on to you what I have myself re-

[1] I Cor. xiv. 26–37.
[2] I Cor. xv.
[3] I Cor. xiv. 9.
[4] I Cor. xiv. 11.
[5] I Cor. xiv. 19.
[6] I Cor. xiv. 39–40.
[7] I Cor. xv. 1.

ceived."[1] From this cardinal faith in the resurrection of Christ, Paul rises, however, to comprehensive speculations concerning the nature of this life and the next, and these meditations have become among the most prized of Christian teachings and a source of Christian consolation ever since. Paul's friends at Corinth had, it appears, accepted a belief in the resurrection of Christ, but had not regarded this belief as affecting their own lives. The apostle, therefore, argues that the experience of resurrection is one which all believers may share. "Ah, if in this life we have nothing but a mere hope in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied most! But it is not so! Christ did rise from the dead, he was the first to be reaped of those who sleep in death."[2] Thus those "who belong to Christ"[3] share his glory. "If dead men do not rise, let us eat and drink, for we will be dead to-morrow!"[4] Nor do these admonitions satisfy Paul's soaring mind. Catching fire from his own words, he breaks into lyrical prophecy concerning the nature and destiny of the soul: "How do the dead rise? What kind of body have they when they come?"[5] The glowing passage which follows, and which has been to multitudes of pious souls an adequate interpretation of the mystery of death, does not, in fact, encourage critical analysis.[6] Its archaic zoology, its fanciful eschatology,[7] its sounding trumpet, at whose call the "dead will rise imperishable,"[8]—

[1] I Cor. xv. 3.
[2] I Cor. xv. 19–20.
[3] I Cor. xv. 23.
[4] I Cor. xv. 32.
[5] I Cor. xv. 35.
[6] I Cor. xv. 39.
[7] I Cor. xv. 51.
[8] I Cor. xv. 52.

these daring affirmations, at one point appropriating the language of the mystery-religions, and boldly declaring "Behold I show you a mystery," [1] at another point utilizing the Jewish tradition of a millennial hope,—all these intermingled and visionary prophecies might seem to confuse, rather than console, the modern mind, and to exhibit a master of rhetoric rather than a rational and permanent counsellor. Yet it has been a trustworthy instinct which has accepted these verses as the classic expression of Christian consolation. Through the archaic forms of thought, and the evanescent picture of a cosmic drama, with its final climax occurring "in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call," [2] Christian worshippers have detected the dominating purpose which, in this postscript, as throughout the letter, the teacher desires to express. What he has in mind, and what he says that the Corinthians lack, is the spiritualization of their faith. Whether he is writing of practical morals, or family life, or decorum in worship, or immortality, his controlling aim is to recall his friends from externalism, conventionalism, and traditionalism, to the "spiritual gifts" which are within their power if they themselves belong to Christ. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Realm of God, nor can the perishing inherit the imperishable." [3] Emancipation from the corruptible and participation with the Eternal,—this is the sublime desire which makes his closing chapters a

[1] I Cor. xv. 51 A. V.
[2] I Cor. xv. 52.
[3] I Cor. xv. 50.

fitting corollary to his lyric of love, and which carries many a reader without reluctance through much dubious physiology and unacceptable eschatology under the momentum of a great and spiritual hope.

Thus the first of these letters to the Corinthians has a twofold character. On the one hand, it is local, immediate, and intimate; answering questions, recalling pledges, rebuking misconduct, and in all these problems of social ethics assuming that the existing world-order is soon to be dissolved; on the other hand, it rises above these temporary problems to the sublime affirmation of a reign of Love. The first of these aspects of the letter can be for the modern mind of historical interest only. What Paul thought of the marriage of Christians with non-Christians, or of the Jewish tradition of a resurrection-body, is not likely to seem of practical importance among the new conditions of modern lives. The world-order has not been dissolved as Paul anticipated; the Græco-Roman world, which was to his mind awaiting the great catastrophe, has itself passed away; and his letter would deal with other problems if he were writing to Americans in the twentieth century instead of to questioners of the first century in Corinth. Yet through the temporary and local teaching shines a permanent and universal truth. To set the details of moral decision before the judgment-seat of a general law; to translate the duties of home, worship, and toleration into the language of Christian love; to rise from technical instructions to "spiritual gifts,"—

such is the aim which dominates this impetuous letter, and which no change of time or place can render archaic or outgrown. As the letter to the Galatians had struck the note of liberty, so that to the Corinthians resounds with the note of spirituality. The one was prompted by the provincialism of thought which prevailed in these communities; the other by the externalism of their ethics. One was a plea for cosmopolitanism in religion; the other for the spiritualization of religion. The liberty which had been Paul's first desire for his brethren must be a liberty founded in love.

To this impression which the first letter makes on the modern mind the second letter adds but little. It also is prompted by reports brought from Corinth, but these are now of a more cheering kind. Timothy had been sent as a mediator and had returned, and Paul himself had already been a second time to Corinth, for he says, "Here am I all ready to pay you my third visit." [1] "This will be my third visit to you." [2] What he has thus heard and seen has, it appears, already drawn from him another letter, no longer extant, but possibly preserved in part at the end of the second existing Epistle (chapters x–xiii). It was a letter so severe in its reproaches that the writer says of it, "If I did pain you by that letter, I do not regret it. . . . For you were pained as God meant you to be pained, and so you got no harm from what I did." [3] Finally, Titus had been despatched to Corinth, and had brought back news so reassuring

[1] II Cor. xii. 14. [2] II Cor. xiii. 1. [3] II Cor. vii. 8–9.

that Paul writes, "But the God who comforts the dejected comforted me by the arrival of Titus." [1]

All these antecedent events contribute to a style of writing which, even for Paul, is extraordinarily personal and colloquial. The letter deals almost exclusively with his own emotions, desires, and self-scrutiny. "Now I would like you to know about the distress which befell me in Asia." [2] "Am I beginning again to 'commend' myself?" [3] "O Corinthians, I am keeping nothing back from you. . . . Open your hearts wide to me." [4] "I aim at being above reproach not only from God but also from men." [5] "I do not boast beyond my limits." [6] "No one is to think me a fool; but even so, pray bear with me, fool as I am." [7] "But I trust you will find I am no failure, and I pray to God that you may not go wrong." [8] Self-abasement and self-respect, discouragement and confidence, anxiety and joy, succeed each other in this vivid and undisguised self-confession; until at last he sums up his claim to authority by recounting his own sufferings for the cause. "But let them vaunt as they please, I am equal to them." [9] "If there is to be any boasting, I will boast of what I am weak enough to suffer!" [10] It is a candid revelation of heroism and persistency, reported with complete simplicity but not less complete self-assurance, a

[1] II Cor. vii. 6.
[2] II Cor. i. 8.
[3] II Cor. iii. 1.
[4] II Cor. vi. 11, 13.
[5] II Cor. viii. 21.
[6] II Cor. x. 15.
[7] II Cor. xi. 16.
[8] II Cor. xiii. 6.
[9] II Cor. xi. 21.
[10] II Cor. xi. 30.

story perennially precious as the picture of a self-examining and self-asserting life.

In all this prismatic record of shifting moods, however, no new principle of faith or conduct is announced. Searching phrases flash as they hurry by, and striking paradoxes arrest the reader's mind. "In me then death is active, in you life." [1] "The seen is transient, the unseen eternal." [2] "He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly." [3] Yet these universally applicable aphorisms, precious as they have become to all readers, occur as incidents in the discourse, as by-products of a letter whose aim is the restoration of the writer's authority and the renewal of the reader's confidence. The second letter to the Corinthians is an almost unique utterance of personal aims and hopes, but it is only by ingenious methods of interpretation that permanent contributions to Christian truth can be derived from it by the modern mind.

The letter to the Romans is more ambitious in its purpose, more spacious in its reasoning, and in many aspects much more difficult to understand. In reach of argument, range of vision, and, more than all, in its extraordinary fusion of feeling and thought, of heat and light, it has been generally accepted as one of the greatest achievements of human genius.[4] It has been suggested by Canon

[1] II Cor. iv. 12. [2] II Cor. iv. 18. [3] II Cor. ix. 6.

[4] *Cf.* Godet, "Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," tr. 1880, p. 1. "Coleridge calls the Epistle to the Romans 'the profoundest book in existence.' Chrysostom had it read to him twice a week. Luther, in his famous preface, says:

Farrar that Paul's audience was so far below the intellectual level of Roman learning that the thought of "receiving the lessons of a poor, accused and wandering Jew" would have made Seneca "stand aghast;" that Paul's correspondents were in the "very depths of poverty;" [1] that Greek hearers "mocked and jeered;" and that Festus, Felix, and Seneca's brother Gallio "took no notice." [2] This estimate of Paul's readers is, however, difficult to maintain in the case of his letter to the Romans. Such a letter must, it would seem, have been addressed to those who could appreciate, even if they could not wholly understand, a complex and subtle argument. The writer feels no restraint in rising to heights of reasoning where scholars ever since have found it hard to follow. The letter to the Romans was obviously written by a scholar for the sake of readers who, even if not themselves scholars, could welcome refined discriminations and daring flights of thought.

'This Epistle is the chief book of the New Testament, the purest Gospel.' . . . Melanchthon copied it twice with his own hand. . . . The Reformation was undoubtedly the work of the Epistle to the Romans, as well as of that to the Galatians; and the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the Church will be connected as effect and cause with a deeper understanding of this book."

[1] F. W. Farrar, "Seekers after God," 1888, p. 171; citing II Cor. viii. 2 and Acts xvii. 32, where "the word expresses the most profound and unconcealed contempt."

[2] Acts xviii. 17. *Cf.* Gummere, "Seneca as Philosopher," 1922, p. 70. "The authorized translation does the Roman injustice. The passage really means: Gallio felt that the accusation was not in his jurisdiction to handle."

Yet this classic document does not in its main intention differ greatly from the earlier letters of Paul. The same problem that had met him, both in Galatia and in Corinth, of adjusting a Jewish faith to a Greek environment, again confronts him in larger terms and under more complex conditions. The letter to the Romans has been justly said in this respect to "stand midway between Corinthians and Galatians." The first of these preceding letters had addressed "a Greek-thinking population;" the second, a community where the "stiff Judaistic Christianity of Jerusalem" opposed the "liberal Christianity supported by Paul." "Romans, as compared with the other Epistles, has more of the Greek element than Galatians, and more of the Judaic element than Corinthians." [1] In other words, the aim of this elaborate discourse is to meet both these forms of dissent, and to harmonize, both historically and philosophically, the Palestinian and the Hellenistic tendencies. If the purpose of the letter to the Galatians was to liberalize the new faith, and that of the letter to the Corinthians to spiritualize it, then, under the same loose definition, the letter to the Romans gives the impression of being written to systematize the instruction already delivered. Subtle distinctions, far-reaching generalizations, and practical admonitions abound throughout this masterpiece of reasoning, swelling the volume of its thought; but the movement of the whole is toward a systematic harmonization

[1] Lake, "The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 379.

of conflicting tendencies, as though two rivers with opposing currents met and were at last merged in a larger stream.

To accomplish this ministry of reconciliation in the community at Rome, Paul turns first to the conservatives and then to the liberals, with his argument that the Gospel has "saving power for every one who has faith, for the Jew first and for the Greek as well," [1] and that the same Gospel will not less certainly bring "anguish and calamity for every human soul that perpetrates evil, for the Jew first and for the Greek as well." [2] To the Judaizers he points out the inner meaning of their own law. "He is no Jew who is merely a Jew outwardly, nor is circumcision something outward in the flesh." [3] "Is God only the God of Jews? Is he not the God of the Gentiles as well? Surely, he is." [4] "For Abraham . . . became the father of many nations." [5] Yet the law was not without its effect. "Why, had it not been for the law, I would never have known what sin meant!" [6] The law, however, even when thus given its place, leaves one in an irreconcilable conflict from which the new faith sets one free. "I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. . . . Who will rescue me from this body of death? God will! Thanks be to him through Jesus Christ our Lord!" [7] Thus, the "law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ

[1] Rom. i. 16.
[2] Rom. ii. 9.
[3] Rom. ii. 28.
[4] Rom. iii. 29.
[5] Rom. iv. 18.
[6] Rom. vii. 7.
[7] Rom. vii. 24, 25.

Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death." [1]

Having thus recalled the Judaizers from conformity to a ritual law to the authority of a spiritual faith, Paul turns to the more difficult task of grafting Greek liberalism on this Hebrew stock; and for this purpose he utilizes, by every device of analogy and allegory, the evidence of the Old Testament itself to endorse his cosmopolitan Christianity. Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Moses, Pharaoh, Hosea, Isaiah, the Book of Psalms,—all are cited in turn to illustrate "the wealth that lies in his glory for the objects of his mercy . . . whom he has called from among the Gentiles as well as the Jews." [2] Passage after passage from the ancient law is interpreted as teaching this spiritual inclusiveness. "Israel has failed to secure the object of its quest," [3] "and David says, 'Let their table prove a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution for them.'" [4] "By their lapse salvation has passed to the Gentiles." [5] Yet the Gentiles too should not boast of this participation in the new faith. They are like a shoot of wild olive grafted on an ancient tree, and should remember that the stem bears them, not they the stem. "It is only a partial insensibility that has come over Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in. This done, all Israel will be saved." [6] By such arguments, unconvincing as they may be

[1] Rom. viii. 2.
[2] Rom. ix. 23, 24.
[3] Rom. xi. 7.
[4] Rom. xi. 9 (quoting Psalm lxix. 22).
[5] Rom. xi. 11.
[6] Rom. xi. 25, 26.

to-day, but conclusive to Paul's audience, he is led to confirm this sublime declaration, which is as significant for the modern as for the ancient world, "There is no distinction of Jew and Greek, the same Lord is Lord of them all, with ample for all who invoke him." [1]

Thus, with consummate skill, yet with genuine conviction, the apostle holds the middle path of reconciliation, and Paul, the Jew, appeals to the Jewish law to confirm a faith which has outgrown that law. What in the other letters was exhortation has now become demonstration. The Hellenists are to be welcomed to a legitimate inheritance; the Jews to be led to Christ through their own law. There had been, in short, a twofold *Præparatio Evangelica*,—the preparation for a liberalized Israel, and the preparation for a spiritualized world. The Hebrew Scriptures were prophetic of the larger faith. With the finest rhetorical strategy, the apostle concludes his argument, not with any comments of his own, but in the language of Job, with which every devout Jew was familiar: "What a fathomless wealth lies in the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments! How mysterious his methods! Whoever understood the thoughts of the Lord? Who has ever been his counsellor? Who has first given to him and has to be repaid? " [2]

From this main thesis of his letter Paul proceeds, as in his earlier writings, to enumerate many prac-

[1] Rom. x. 12.

[2] Rom. xi. 33–35; Job xv. 8; xxxvi. 22; xxxv. 7.

tical consequences of this comprehensive faith, and to add those personal greetings with which his letters habitually close. To many readers, this ethical appendix (chapters xii–xv) is not only intrinsically precious, but permits a certain sense of relief, after the subtle and elaborate reasoning which precedes. These intimate counsels and candid warnings are in the main verifiable under any circumstances and in any age. They leave one at the close of the letter with an impression of serenity and wisdom, as though the tortuous windings and bewildering eddies of the teacher's thought had at last given place to a gentler flow among broadening fields and familiar scenes. Self-importance and self-seeking are rebuked, forgiveness and sympathy are urged, in aphorisms that have become moral maxims for the Christian world: "I tell everyone of your number . . . that he is not to think more of himself than he ought to think." [1] "Let your love be a real thing." [2] "Never pay back evil for evil." [3] "Get the better of evil by doing good." [4] Submission to magistrates, freedom from debt, tolerance of different views about food and "a particular day," restraint in criticism and sympathy for the reactionary, are taught with firm authority; and the law of conduct which includes them all is announced: "We who are strong ought to bear the burdens that the weak make for themselves and us." [5] Finally, Paul's own plans for further

[1] Rom. xii. 3.
[2] Rom. xii. 9.
[3] Rom. xii. 17.
[4] Rom. xii. 21.
[5] Rom. xv. 1.

journeyings are disclosed in the brave assurance: "Well, once I finish this business . . . I will start for Spain and take you on the way," [1] and the letter closes with a long series of salutations to not less than twenty-six "choice Christians" in Rome, "and all the saints in their company," and with corresponding messages, not only from himself, but from eight of his "fellow-workers," with whom even Paul's amanuensis includes himself,—"I Tertius, who write the letter, salute you in the Lord." [2] It is as though the river of Paul's affection had at last overflowed its narrow banks of argument, and swept a flood of greetings into every corner of the Roman world which held his "beloved in the Lord." [3]

When one passes from these four letters which comprise the main body of Paul's teaching to the Letters of the Imprisonment (Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon), and reads them also in rapid succession, detaching one's self from incidental arguments and observing the main drift of the whole, one is almost startled by the new note which is heard, and the concentration of the writer's mind on a single idea. The transition

[1] Rom. xv. 28.

[2] Rom. xvi. 13, 16, 22.

[3] Many scholars maintain that Rom. xvi. was not originally a part of the letter, but represents a note sent to Ephesus. So Lake, "Earlier Epistles," 1911, pp. 325 ff.: "The fact always remains that Rom. xvi. 1–23 is an integral part of all MSS. of the Epistle which we now possess. This is not everything, but it is a great deal. . . . Still there seems to me to be a distinct balance of argument in favour of Ephesus."

is so marked that some critics have been led to deny the authenticity of these later writings, and to affirm that both in idea and in phrase they represent a later age than that of Paul. Change in emphasis, however, and increasing preoccupation with one great thought do not in themselves preclude identity of authorship. Consistency is the last of virtues that Paul would claim. Throughout his career his mind was extraordinarily flexible, impressionable and receptive, and each new experience enriched his teaching with new suggestions. At last he was in Rome itself, a prisoner, with leisure for meditation, and with his earlier aggressiveness of mind tempered both by hard experience and by the tender ministrations of new friends. In two of these letters from Rome, it is evident that he is addressing communities which he has never visited; for in writing to the Colossians he says, "I want you to understand my deep concern for you and for those at Laodicea, for all who have never seen my face; "[1] and the letter now entitled "To the Ephesians" is in the earliest manuscripts addressed to "The saints who are faithful,"[2] and adds, "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus,"[3] a phrase which Paul would seem unlikely to use of a city where he had lived for years. Indeed, it seems not improbable that this letter may be that of which he writes to the Colossians, "And when this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans; also, see that you read the letter that

[1] Col. ii. 1. [2] Eph. i. 1. [3] Eph. i. 15.

reaches you from Laodicea." [1] It should not surprise one, therefore, if in such a correspondence, maintained in his last days with brethren whom he knew only from afar, the controversies which prompted his earlier letters no longer appear critical, and if in the greater calmness of his seclusion, the mood of mysticism, which had always struggled to express itself, takes complete possession of his mind, and utters itself in spiritual rhapsody and lyrical prayer.

Of the three letters, that to the Philippians is the most intimate and affectionate. Messages concerning contributions had already passed between the prisoner at Rome and the brethren at Philippi. Indeed, it appears that this community had been the first to feel the responsibility of sending aid. "In the early days of the Gospel, when I had left Macedonia, no church but yourselves had any financial dealings with me; even when I was at Thessalonica, you sent money more than once for my needs." [2] It was planned that special messengers should be despatched to renew this affectionate intimacy. Paul's "fellow-soldier" Epaphroditus,[3] as well as Timothy,[4] "like a son helping his father," [5] were to visit the Philippians, so that, as Paul writes, "I may be heartened by news of you," [6] and "you may be glad when you see him again." [7] At the close of the letter, however, we are surprised to learn that the gifts which

[1] Col. iv. 16.
[2] Phil. iv. 15–16.
[3] Phil. ii. 25.
[4] Phil. ii. 19.
[5] Phil. ii. 22.
[6] Phil. ii. 19.
[7] Phil. ii. 28.

Epaphroditus was to bring have already arrived,—"I am amply supplied with what you have sent by Epaphroditus." [1] Either, therefore, we have here a composite document, comprising one letter written before the messenger departed and another after he returned, or, as may not be less likely, we have a characteristic Pauline postscript, in which that which was first written of as a hope is at the close supplemented by news of fulfillment.

Within this frame of a practical demand, the picture of Paul the aged is vividly painted in his own words. The scars of earlier controversies are still visible. "Beware," he says, "of these dogs, these wicked workmen, the incision-party! We are the true Circumcision, we who worship God in spirit." [2] Solitary meditation has, however, at last detached his mind from these divisive problems, and indeed from contemplation of the historical Jesus, or enforcement of the teaching of the Gospels. From all these contemporary or personal concerns, Paul now turns to the portrayal of a cosmic drama, in which a celestial Christ, the most exalted of God's angelic attendants, who might have even "snatched at equality" with God, in sublime self-renunciation, "taking the nature of a servant, . . . stooped in his obedience even to die, and to die upon the cross. Therefore God raised him high and conferred on him a Name above all names, so that before the Name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and underneath the earth, and every tongue confess

[1] Phil. iv. 18. [2] Phil. iii. 2–3.

that 'Jesus Christ is Lord' to the glory of God the Father." [1] The cosmogony of the mystery-religions has seized upon his eager mind, and recalls to him a verse from the Book of Isaiah where Jehovah's "word is gone out . . . that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." [2] Swept on by these analogies and prophecies, Paul breaks into a mystic strain, and the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth are sublimated into the conception of a preëxistent being, descending in the humble form of man and raised again to glory.

Yet it is not less noticeable that this Christological rhapsody is but a thrilling interlude in a letter pitched for the most part in a lower key. No sooner is this burst of mystic praise uttered than the tide of Paul's feeling ebbs as it has risen, and messages of friendly affection and pastoral counsel follow, as though the great surge of emotion had passed. "Therefore, my beloved, as you have been obedient always and not simply when I was present, so, now that I am absent, work all the more strenuously at your salvation with reverence and trembling." [3] "So then, my brothers, for whom I cherish love and longing, my joy and crown, this is how you must stand firm in the Lord, O my beloved." [4] However significant may be the sublime conception of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, the letter is in its main intention not chiefly Christological or controversial, but a message of affection, joy, thanksgiving,

[1] Phil. ii. 6–11.
[2] Is. xlv. 23.
[3] Phil. ii. 12.
[4] Phil. iv. 1.

pride, and love. The hostilities and hardships of many years have released their hold, and a sense of the unity of spirit which makes one "colony of heaven" [1] moves the apostle to "rejoice in the Lord," [2] and to feel "God's peace that surpasses all our dreams." [3]

The letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians may be considered together, for they have the same plan, use in large part the same language, and reflect the same external circumstances. Rome, at the time of Paul's imprisonment, had become a storm-centre of philosophical and religious speculation. The mystery-religions, Greek and Oriental, had brought thither their various doctrines of redemption, teaching the descent of a god in human form to save mankind. Greek philosophy had reached a sublimated doctrine of incarnation in its conception of a Divine Reason, or "Logos," as the agent of the Eternal. Jewish tradition had peopled the spiritual world with angelic presences, good and evil, contending with each other as powers of the air. In the heated atmosphere of these cosmic speculations Paul's last years were passed, and with his immense capacity for sympathy and interpretation he conceived that the essential truth of all these teachings was triumphantly expressed in the dying and the risen Christ. "The Apostolic tradition, the primitive Gentile Christian apprehension of the Gospel, the Judaism in which he was brought up, and the redemptive religions of the time and region in which he preached

[1] Phil. iii. 20. [2] Phil. iii. 1. [3] Phil. iv. 7.

the mystery of salvation through Christ, all passed through the alembic of a singular personal experience."[1] In Christ was the disclosure of those esoteric truths which had been hidden in the mystery-religions—the "open secret of God,"[2] "the open secret of his will."[3] In Christ, not less, was the manifestation of that preëxistent Reason to which, according to Greek philosophy, God had committed his redemptive work. "It was by him that all things were created."[4] "He is prior to all, and all coheres in him,"[5] "in terms of the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus the Lord."[6] In Christ, finally, was the end of that strife of angels which to devout Jews made the universe a scene of spiritual war. "Let no one lay down rules for you . . . with regard to fasting and the cult of angels . . . , instead of keeping in touch with that Head under whom the entire Body . . . grows with growth divine."[7] "It is in Christ that the entire Fulness of deity has settled bodily; . . . he is the Head of every angelic Ruler and Power."[8] The clashing discords of Hebrew angelology had been at last harmonized in Christ, and the saviour-god of Hellenic speculation is now discovered to be none else than Christ. Sages from the Orient had brought to Rome their mysteries; but in Christ the mystery-drama of redemption had been historically enacted on a Palestinian

[1] G. F. Moore, "History of Religions," 1919, II. 136.
[2] Col. ii. 2.
[3] Eph. i. 9.
[4] Col. i. 16.
[5] Col. i. 17.
[6] Eph. iii. 11.
[7] Col. ii. 18–19.
[8] Col. ii. 9–10.

stage. All that vagrant mystics and scholastic metaphysicians were offering in Rome as wares to attract the thoughtful became appropriated by the receptive mind of Paul, and converted into its Christian equivalent. Was any inquirer tempted by a mystery-religion? Here was the "profound symbol . . . as regards Christ and the church." [1] Did any one welcome the doctrine of an intermediary divinity? In Christ was "the likeness of the unseen God, born first before all the creation." [2] Was any Jew perturbed by the thought of malicious angels assaulting his soul? Here was a power which was "rescuing us from the power of the Darkness, and transferring us to the realm of his beloved Son!" [3]

Such was the flood of mystical assurance which, at the last, swept over the mind of Paul. Neither of these later letters concerns itself seriously with the Jesus of the Palestinian Gospels. In both the faith of a Christian turns to a Being whose influence did not begin until the temporary obscuration of his humanity had been removed. This Being was, indeed, not God Himself, but an emanation from the Deity, an instrument of God's purpose, a messenger of God's love,—one of many beneficent angels, but the greatest and the nearest to God. The purpose of the apostle has become, as he says, "that I should bring the Gentiles the gospel of the fathomless wealth of Christ and enlighten all men upon the new order of that divine secret which God the Creator of all concealed from

[1] Eph. v. 32. [2] Col. i. 15. [3] Col. i. 13.

eternity—intending to let the full sweep of the divine wisdom be disclosed now by the church to the angelic Rulers and Authorities in the heavenly sphere, in terms of the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom, as we have faith in him, we enjoy our confidence of free access." [1]

It is not essential to follow this lyrical mysticism into its details, and there are many aspects of it so obscure in themselves, or so intimately related with other obscure or esoteric teachings, that none but the most erudite scholars can estimate their significance. Nor is it necessary to explain to one's self completely this impressive transition in Paul's thought. To some minds it may appear, not a conversion of Greek and Oriental speculations to the cause of Christ, but a surrender of that cause to these external influences; so that mystical orthodoxy, which finds its chief support in these later letters of Paul, may be perpetuating, not so much Christian, as extra-Christian or pre-Christian ideals. To other minds, as has already been noted, the change of emphasis is explicable by nothing less than a change of author. To still other readers—and perhaps with more justification—the new note of mystical enthusiasm is but an added evidence of the susceptibility and flexibility of Paul's intellectual life, careless of consistency, assimilating suggestions from every side, and passing at last from the aggressive self-confidence of missionary activity to the contemplative joys of mystical

[1] Eph. iii. 8–12.

communion. The mysticism of Paul is, it is true, not wholly a late arrival in his nature. Throughout his earlier letters and among many external controversies this sense of direct communion struggles to express itself. "We discuss that hidden wisdom which God decreed from all eternity for our glory." [1] "What no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard. . . . God has prepared all that for those who love him." [2] This mood, which was at first occasional, comes at last to dominate his thought, and to give wings to his letters. As John Locke has observed of the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes, "not in the ordinary way of argumentation and formal reasoning," but "all as it were in a rapture, and in a style far above the plain, didactical way; he pretends not to teach them anything, but couches all, that he would drop into their minds, in thanksgiving and prayers, which affording a greater liberty and flight to his thoughts, he gives utterance to them in noble and sublime expressions, suitable to the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God." [3] If this is the general character of these lyrical letters, it is certainly one of the strangest incidents of history that these mystical utterances and emotional raptures should have been chosen from all the writings of Paul to be made the foundation-stones of a system of theology, and that a complete plan of human redemption should be based on the evidence of a single verse.[4]

[1] I Cor. ii. 7.
[2] I Cor. ii. 9.
[3] "Works," VIII. p. 392.
[4] Phil. ii. 7.

From these spiritual flights Paul descends, in the letter to the Ephesians as in that to the Colossians, to enumerate various practical precepts. Conduct, as seen by him, was environed by angelic witnesses and threatened by evil forces. "For we have to struggle, not with blood and flesh but with the angelic Rulers, the angelic Authorities, the potentates of the dark present, the spirit-forces of evil in the heavenly sphere." [1] Morality, therefore, is to be steadied and chastened by a sense of the cosmic primacy of Christ, which binds individuals and communities into an organic life. "For he, Christ, is the head, and under him, as the entire Body is welded together and compacted by every joint with which it is supplied, the due activity of each part enables the Body to grow and build itself up in love." [2] Yet neither Hebrew mythology nor Greek cosmology can overcome Paul's practical sagacity or ethical aim. These letters are as remarkable for the common sense with which they end as for the mystical illumination with which they begin. "Love," declares the letter to the Colossians, "is the link of the perfect life." [3] "Whatever be your task, work at it heartily." [4] "Let your talk always have a saving salt of grace about it." [5] "Be clothed with compassion, kindliness, humility, gentleness, and good temper." [6] In the same strain the letter to the Ephesians ends: "I beg of you to live a life worthy of your calling, with perfect modesty and

[1] Eph. vi. 12.
[2] Eph. iv. 16.
[3] Col. iii. 14.
[4] Col. iii. 23.
[5] Col. iv. 6.
[6] Col. iii. 12.

gentleness, showing forbearance to one another patiently, zealous in love." [1]

Thus these glowing Epistles become a fitting climax to what has preceded them. As it was the purpose of Paul's earlier letters to liberalize the Christian faith, and of the second group to spiritualize it, and of the more formal Epistle to the Romans to systematize it, so in the meditations and revelations of Paul's last phase he is absorbed in the idealizing of history, the lifting of its prose into poetry, the setting of its facts within a cosmic plan. The first intention of Paul was to rescue the new faith from Palestinian asphyxiation and to give it a chance to breathe in the free air of a Greek world; his second aim was the emancipation of that faith from ceremonial and ritual and to secure for it the authority of the spirit; his third desire was to justify that faith by logical reasoning and to rationalize the convictions which he had attained. Finally, he ascends from these plains of debate and demonstration into the serener air of contemplation and vision, as the first disciples went up with their Master on the Mount of Transfiguration, and saw there a glory which was invisible below. In this final mood, there is no further need to recall the human Teacher of Galilee. Indeed, the human life of Jesus is now viewed as the temporal habitation of a Divine Being, descending for a time from heaven. His physical form was but an "appearing in human form," and "taking the nature of a servant." [2] The cosmological idealism of

[1] Eph. iv. 1, 2. [2] Phil. ii. 8, 7.

Paul thus becomes a premonition of Gnosticism and an encouragement of Docetism. It looks, not backward to the synoptic Gospels with their practical ethics, "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts upon them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock," [1] but forward to the Fourth Gospel with its philosophy of history: "The Logos became flesh and tarried among us." [2] Galilee and Jerusalem, the Sermon on the Mount and the parables, have become indistinguishable points in the landscape of faith, as Paul rises above them among the clouds of spiritual communion.

There remain but a few brief evidences of Paul's last moods and thoughts. The letters to Titus and Timothy, even if regarded as authentic, would add little of significance, except the touching *apologia pro vita sua* with which one letter concludes, and which leaves the apostle facing death with the composure of a good conscience and the courage of an unperturbed faith. "The last drops of my own sacrifice are falling; my time to go has come. I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith. Now the crown of a good life awaits me, with which the Lord, that just Judge, will reward me on the great Day." [3] To these touching words of self-surrender, there succeeds, however, a characteristic, and almost amusing, outburst of indignation, as if to testify that the volcanic fires of the old man's nature were by no means extinct. "Alexander the blacksmith,"

[1] Matt. vii. 24. [2] John i. 14. [3] II. Tim iv. 6–8.

Paul adds, "has done me a lot of harm: the Lord will pay him back for what he has done." [1] May not this be cherished as a genuine reminiscence of the real Paul,—eager to sacrifice himself, yet not quite ready to forgive his enemies; facing death with sublime tranquillity, yet still settling accounts with those who had done him "a lot of harm"? How delightfully incongruous is the further confession, "My time to go has come," with the scrupulous order to Timothy which immediately follows, to "bring the mantle I left at Troas with Carpus, also my books, and particularly my paper." [2] The sublime and the insignificant, the universal and the particular, renunciation and combativeness, meet without disguise; and the same splendid indifference to consistency which has made the letters of Paul so perplexing to the system-makers of the Church gives to these last words,—if indeed these words be his,—a peculiar pathos and reality.

There remains the beautiful little letter to Philemon, which should be chronologically considered with the Letters of the Imprisonment, but which, by some happy accident, or fine sense of rhetorical climax,—or, perhaps, as prosaic critics are inclined to believe, simply because it is short,—has been given its place at the end of the series. His "beloved fellow-worker," living at Colossæ, had, it seemed, among his slaves one Onesimus, a "worthless character" who had run away from his master and had appeared in Rome. There he had become, Paul writes, a "spiritual son born

[1] II Tim. iv. 14. [2] II Tim. iv. 13.

while I was in prison;" [1] and now Paul sends back the runaway, "no longer a mere slave but something more than a slave—a beloved brother," [2] confident that Philemon will "receive him as you would receive me [Paul], and if he has cheated you of any money or owes you any sum, put that down to my account." [3] "I know you will do even more than I tell you." [4] The controversies of literalists have raged round this kindly letter as though it were a defence of fugitive-slave laws. It is, in fact, not a forensic argument, but the private correspondence of a courteous gentleman. "I would have liked to keep him beside me," Paul writes of this converted slave, "but I did not want to do anything without your consent." [5] The letter is like a calm sunset after the stormy day of Paul's career, and leaves him at the close preoccupied with kindly thoughts of personal affection. Yet it is as sagacious as it is considerate. It assumes magnanimity in the master, and forgiveness for the runaway. It is to the last the high-minded gentleman, who is at the same time the unanswerable disputant. He is, as he always has been, indifferent to social distinctions, claiming the slave as a spiritual son, and the slave-owner as his "beloved fellow-worker." Yet, as he had once won a hearing from the Athenians by assuring them that they were "a most religious people," [6] so now he pledges Philemon to generosity by anticipating that "your goodness to me may come of

[1] Philemon, vs. 10.
[2] vs. 16.
[3] vs. 17–18.
[4] vs. 21.
[5] vs. 13, 14.
[6] Acts xvii. 22.

your own free will." [1] He asks with confidence this act of grace, and then lifts that act into religious significance with a concluding prayer that "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." [2]

Such, in brief, would appear to be the impression which may not unreasonably be made by the letters of Paul on a modern reader, as he surrenders himself, without preconception or erudition, to their power and charm. Many details remain obscure, and some of the teachings are involved in issues which are hopelessly remote or in speculations which are demonstrably unfulfilled. Yet through the labyrinthine reasoning which it has been the delight of theologians to penetrate, and the mystical illumination which has reassured a discouraged orthodoxy, the main intention of the letters seems revealed beyond dispute. An alert and fertile mind, trained in the learning of the time, and fortified by an almost unprecedented experience of danger and suffering, is obedient to the transforming vision of a risen Christ and a universal faith, and pours out, often in bewildering language, an unrestrained stream of exhortation, argument, aspiration, admonition, and affection. To find in these intensely human documents a coherent or systematic scheme of Christian theology is to miss their note of personal correspondence and paternal intention. What meets one is, in fact, not so much a single and consistent personality as a series of phases, a life in motion, so that one

[1] Philemon 14. [2] Philemon 25.

seems to be dealing not with a single character but with several men. In the earlier letters, the writer is Paul the Emancipator, the protagonist of a liberal Christianity, the rescuer of the Gospel from the bonds of the Law. To this character succeeds that of Paul the Conciliator, adjusting the conflicting claims of Gentiles and Jews. This phase of self-expression is followed by that of Paul the Spiritualizer, penetrating the body of faith to its life-giving soul. Still again, this "prismatic" character reappears as Paul the Mystic, indifferent to the evidence of history, sustained by the contemplation of a cosmic drama, turning from the human Jesus whom he had opposed to the eternal Christ with whom he daily communes. Finally, behind all these shifting moods, stands the figure of Paul the Counsellor, the practical moralist, the candid critic of conduct, and sagacious guide in matters of duty.

Which of these, one may ask, is the real Paul? Should he be remembered as the apostle of religious liberty, or the creator of Christian theology, or the witness of the mysteries of God, or the teacher of Christian ethics? Is he primarily emancipator, spiritualizer, harmonizer, mystic, or counsellor? Do these transitions indicate growth or decline in character? Is the real Paul not disclosed until he writes the letters of the captivity, or are these letters utterances which betray Paul the aged? The obvious answer must be that all these phases are real, and must find their places in one's final estimate of the great teacher. The letters, in short,

must be taken just as they are, as the record of a singularly many-sided and responsive nature, which cared little for consistency and everything for reality. The liberal and the Calvinist, the moralist and the mystic, all alike find themselves reassured by the writings of Paul. Sometimes these letters are subtle enough to satisfy the most exacting theologian; sometimes they are plain enough to make a manual of social ethics. In other words, it is futile to construct a closed system of thought and call it Pauline. The teaching shifts with experiences and needs. "There is something transitional about all St. Paul's teaching. We cannot take him out of his historical setting, as so many of his commentators in the nineteenth century tried to do. This is only another way of saying that he was, to use his own expression, a wise master-builder, not a detached thinker, an arm-chair philosopher." [1] Letters of this personal and spontaneous nature must become the despair of those who are looking for continuity or infallibility; for they report a faith in process, the response of an extraordinarily susceptible mind to successive suggestions of life and thought. Paul neither disguises nor palliates his impetuous changes of emphasis, or his abrupt ventures into speculative belief. The impression which one thus receives to-day cannot be very unlike the impression made on his original readers,—the impression of a mind always expectant of new light, reporting with reckless disregard for consistency

[1] W. R. Inge, "Outspoken Essays," 1919, p. 229.

what seemed for the moment most essential, but steadied throughout this inclination to opportunism by a continuous sense of universal significance in the revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

In short, the letters of Paul are the confessions of a great soul and the counsels of a great mind, revealing with the intimacy of passionate affection the hopes and fears, the ideas and ideals, which passing events conspired to suggest. Liberty, unity, spirituality, the bearing of each other's burdens, the supreme law of sacrificial love,—these essential graces of the Christian life, traced in masterly fashion to the abiding influence of the grace of Jesus Christ, give to the letters of Paul their permanent place as guides of religious experience, and make them the most undisguised and the most inspiring chapters of spiritual autobiography in the history of literature.

CHAPTER IV

THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

As one turns from this brief survey of the life and letters of Paul to consider their significance for the modern world, one is, first of all, impressed by the extraordinary susceptibility and mobility of the apostle's mind. Whatever he has learned of God or man is interwoven with his Christian conviction. He touches nothing that he does not assimilate or transform. Jewish tradition, Greek philosophy, and Oriental mysticism are appropriated as material for his alert and discerning thought. The message delivered by Jesus becomes involved in analogies, allusions, and ideas, drawn from every quarter as sanctions of a world-religion. In short, the writings of Paul exhibit, in an almost unparalleled degree, a synthetic mind. His originality is like that of Shakespeare; it is in the gift to seize on familiar and uninstructive material and mould it into a work of genius. Hamlet and the Epistle to the Romans are not less original because one can trace in each the sources of the dramatic plan. To gather all the wisdom of his time into the service of his Lord; to universalize the new faith by appropriating all current philosophy and forms of worship as its adumbration or symbol,—such was the epoch-

making achievement of Paul's fertile and receptive mind. He did not merely select scattered fragments; he recognized spiritual affinities; and this assimilation of foreign elements insured the stability and expansion of Christianity in the Roman world.

This gift for synthesis was the more remarkable because the instincts and practices of Paul's own people promoted a rigid and jealous separatism. They were the chosen race, needing no reinforcement from alien traditions. It required intellectual audacity for one of them to write, "There is no distinction of Jew and Greek, the same Lord is Lord of them all, with ample for all who invoke him." [1] Yet this capacity for assimilation involves its own limitations, and becomes singularly instructive to those who must meet, under different conditions, the new demands of another age. The traditions and cults so freely appropriated by Paul for the edification of his readers have become, for the most part, unconvincing, or even unintelligible, to the modern mind; and a theology or Christology constructed of such material must be at many points inapplicable to the problems and needs of modern life; yet the same gift of appreciation which commended Paul's reasoning to the Greek or Roman world remains indispensable for the interpretation of the world to-day. To take the world as it is, with its varied and conflicting philosophies and faiths, and to discover in their discordant utterances the dominant note of truth which binds their

[1] Rom. x. 12. *Cf.* Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11.

dissonances into harmony,—that must always be the problem, even if unconsciously solved, for the synthetic mind, and it may lead at last, as it did the Apostle Paul, to the full chord of the Christian message which other faiths and philosophies had felt after and had failed to touch.

The first obligation, therefore, of one who recognizes this gift for assimilation in the Apostle Paul is to release his teaching from its temporary forms, and to appropriate those elements of it which are neither Hebraic nor Hellenic, but universal and permanent. There are many signs that Paul's own readers needed to apply a similar discrimination between the accidental and the essential, the transitory and the permanent. He censures them for their imperfect appreciation of his purpose. They are "mere babes in Christ;" they must be fed "with milk, not with solid food." [1] They did not appropriate his message; they evaded it. A similar discrimination between what is temporary and what is timeless must be exercised by the modern reader. The soul of a teaching may be sacrificed to the care of its body. To perpetuate the incidental and contemporary may be to miss the meaning of the essential message; to revere the letter may be to forfeit the spirit. In short, the modern student of Paul is encouraged by him to proceed, as he urged his own readers to learn from him, not by claiming his authority for ways of thought which have become unreal, or for types of worship which are inapplicable to modern life, but by using, with

[1] I Cor. iii. 1, 2.

a reinforcing sense of Paul's companionship, the same discrimination which he exercised, and by finding in him a bold leader and an inspiring guide. "Brothers," he says to the modern world, as he did to the "saints" in Galatia, "You were called to be free; only, do not make your freedom an opening for the flesh, but serve one another in love," [1] or, as he wrote to the Corinthians, "Where-ever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is open freedom." [2]

When one, with this intention, reviews the teaching of Paul, and enters even slightly into what he calls "the glorious freedom of the children of God," [3] it is disheartening to observe that precisely the opposite procedure has often dominated the practice of the Church. Instead of accepting from him the cardinal principle of intellectual liberty, and applying the selective appreciation of which he was a master to the problems of each successive age, these problems have themselves been forced into the procrustean bed of Paul's own environment. Instead of translating Paul's teaching into the language of a new time, the needs of the new time have been translated into the language of Paul. Instead of his being an apostle of flexibility and expansion, he has been regarded as an oracle of fixity and restriction. What has been taught as most essential in Paul has often been that which was merely contemporary, and what is timeless has been subordinated or ignored. Many a Christian theologian has been

[1] Gal. v. 13. [2] II Cor. iii. 17. [3] Rom. viii. 21.

slow to regard himself as what the apostle calls "the minister of a new covenant—a covenant not of written law but of spirit; for the written law kills but the Spirit makes alive." [1]

In the introduction to Paul Sabatier's monumental "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," attention is called to the strange destiny through which a movement "which was in the beginning anti-monastic" resulted "in the constitution of a new family of monks." "It is not rare for history," this author continues, "to have similar contradictions to record. The meek Galilean who preached the religion of a personal revelation, without ceremonial or dogmatic law, triumphed only on condition of being conquered, and of permitting his words of spirit and life to be confiscated by a church essentially dogmatic and sacerdotal." [2] Something of the same destiny has overtaken the teaching of St. Paul. The apostle of spiritual liberty has become for many minds a representative of dogmatic restrictions, and the bulwark of a "church essentially dogmatic and sacerdotal."

This lack of proportion and perspective in the appreciation of Paul's teaching is most conspicuous in the estimate widely accepted of him as a theologian. His profound reflections on the ways of God and the nature of Christ have been given, in many systems of theology, the central place in the formulation of Christian truth. Membership

[1] II Cor. iii. 6.

[2] "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," tr. 1894, p. xviii.

in the Church of Christ has been much more frequently based on the Epistle to the Romans than on the Sermon on the Mount. The Christology of the letter to the Ephesians has overshadowed the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is instructive, therefore, to observe that this acceptance of the theology of Paul as the test of orthodoxy did not commend itself to Paul's contemporaries. The flexibility and susceptibility of his mind made him appear a dangerous innovator. His comrades in Jerusalem were frankly suspicious of him. "They have heard that you teach Jews who live among Gentiles to break away from Moses." [1] Nor were the congregations in his own mission-field deeply moved by his theological generalizations. "The main current of Christian thought did not, as is often imagined, take its rise in Paul, it did not even pass through him; rather it flowed by him as round a rock in the bed of a stream." [2] There was "an *altissimum silentium* concerning Paul in the first half of the second Christian century. . . . Irenæus is, so far as we know, the first theologian who breaks the long and painful silence of the Church concerning Paul. . . . And yet the harmony between Paul and Irenæus is essentially deceptive. It might be said that Irenæus accepted Paul officially, and recognized him as a theologian, at the cost of perverting, in a grand manner, Paul's ideas, and stripping them of their essentials." [3]

[1] Acts xxi. 21. [2] G. F. Moore, "History of Religions," II. 136.
[3] Bousset, "Kyrios Christos," 2 te Aufl. 1921, ss. xii, 356.

The fact is that, in spite of the daring and sublime speculations which have monopolized the attention of so many scholars, Paul was not primarily, or in the estimation of those whom he addressed, a theologian. He was an emancipator, an expansionist, a discerner of the scope and majesty of the Divine purpose, a wise and fearless counsellor among the practical conditions of perplexed or misguided lives. Much of his theology was improvised or transitional; but through the shifting forms of thought there shines, like sunlight through drifting clouds, his illuminating faith. "There is," Dean Inge, with characteristic candor, affirms, "no system in Paul's theology, and there is a singularly rapid development of thought." [1] A German scholar goes even further in affirming that "one might almost as well envisage Frederick the Great merely as an historian;" [2] and in restrained, yet unequivocal, language, one of the most judicious of modern scholars concludes, "As a theological system Paulinism, not-

So, Jowett, "Epistles of St. Paul," ed. 1855, I. 346 ff. "In later writings we find no trace of the mind of St. Paul. His influence seems to pass from the world. . . . The spirit of the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians has revived in later times. But there is no trace that the writings of the apostle left any lasting impress within the Church, or perhaps anywhere in the first ages."

[1] "Outspoken Essays," p. 207. So, J. R. Cohu, "St. Paul and Modern Research," 1911, p. 26. "His teaching is not always consistent. . . . His views grew and broadened with his growing experience, and he never was afraid of contradicting himself."

[2] Weinel, *op. cit.*, tr. 1906, p. 286.

withstanding its wealth of pregnant thoughts, belongs to a past that cannot be revived. . . . What in the Epistles of Paul is still vital and creative is not their theology, but their religion." [1] The theology of Paul is, in a word, precious to the modern world not so much for the validity of its definitions as for the range of its vision; not so much for the dogmas it formulates as for the experiences which it reveals.

This preliminary recognition of the subordinate place of the Pauline theology does not, however, reduce it to insignificance. On the contrary, these soaring speculations of a marvellously receptive and lofty intellect are among the greatest achievements of the human reason. The habit of mind thus represented—unconstrained, masterful, open-minded, and teachable—is that which a modern scholar is trained to appreciate and respect. The theology of Paul was inevitably moulded by the pressure of Hebraism on the one hand and of Hellenism on the other, and neither of these forms of thought is comprehensive enough to hold the theology of the modern world; yet the spiritual experience of the apostle, of which his theology is the formal expression, represents the same problem of conflict and victory that confronts all serious life and thought. A man of great intellectual gifts, passionate emotions, and untiring vitality, finds himself committed to a cause which is in danger of becoming provincial, racial, and restricted, and asks himself how the

[1] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

kindling and reconciling message which burns within him can be delivered to a larger world. It must speak the language of that world; it must interpret current thought in terms of the new obedience; it must universalize Christianity by drawing to its service all the visions of God and schemes of redemption which were familiar in the West or imported from the East. In short, there confronted this new convert precisely the same problem which meets any thoughtful Christian in the modern world.

In his discerning study of "The Religious Experience of St. Paul" (pp. 227 f.), Professor Percy Gardner suggestively remarks that the apostle's "attitude of mind can be appreciated best by those who have felt the strong breeze which is driving modern thought in the direction of pragmatism." "To discover that St. Paul was at heart a pragmatist, and in deep sympathy with this modern way of regarding religion, is a happy thing." Is not this association of Paul's teaching with "the strong breeze which is driving modern thought" precisely the method of claiming attention and asserting contemporaneousness which Paul himself used in observing the "breezes" of his own time? Just as he now might say, "Yes, I am a pragmatist, and this modern way of regarding religion is but a revival of my preaching to each age the things to that age most necessary," so, it would seem, he observed the intellectual tendencies of his own age, and wrought them into his own teaching as confirmations of his message.

How to emancipate Christian teaching from narrowness, sectarianism and prejudice; how to gather into coöperation with its aim all that the science, philosophy and spiritual insight of one's time are prescribing or prompting; how to claim primacy for the Christian ideal among the intellectual forces directing contemporary thought,—such is the problem of Christian leadership for every age; and the supreme example of this bold grasp of the spirit of one's own time and this application to the Christian life of ideas which might seem hopelessly remote or alien, is in the appropriation and adaptation of extra-Christian thought by the fertile genius of the Apostle Paul. One must approach the theology of Paul as one in Paul's own time might enter an ancient temple. The outer courts are crowded with the incidental elements of contemporary mythology; but the reverent worshipper regards these with but a passing glance as he enters the solemn simplicity of the central shrine.

The contemporary influences which are the outer court of Paul's thought, but which have become irrelevant or archaic to the modern mind, may therefore be briefly recalled, and passed by. The most immediate and inevitable was his early training in Hebrew tradition and habits of thought. Radical and transforming as was his conversion to a new faith, and uncompromising as was his assertion that "Christ is an end to law," [1] he could not detach himself from the method of his teachers,

[1] Rom. x. 4.

or from the apocalyptic dreams of his people. He taught, as did the rabbis, by allegories and types. Hagar and Sarah, the slavewoman and the free-woman, are to him types of Jerusalem in servitude and of the Jerusalem on high. "This is an allegory," [1] he says. "Our fathers . . . drank the same spiritual drink (drinking from the spiritual Rock which accompanied them—and that Rock was Christ)." [2] Isaiah, prophesying that the Lord's message shall be uttered "with stammering lips and another tongue," [3] fortifies Paul's interpretation of the gift of tongues.[4] The fact that the promises "made to Abraham" are to "his offspring" suggests to Paul that the use of the singular rather than the plural is a foreshadowing of Christ; [5] and these promises are to be at last fulfilled, so that "the blessing of Abraham might reach the Gentiles in Christ Jesus." [6] In at least one passage, the agile memory of the apostle leaps from point to point in the familiar Scriptures, and he heaps together disconnected passages from various books in his comprehensive indictment of the sins of his own time.[7] It was, no doubt, the most appealing form of argument which could be addressed to those who revered the rabbis, and who, like Paul, knew their Old Testament by heart; but the very applicability of this argu-

[1] Gal. iv. 24.
[2] I Cor. x. 1–4; *cf.* above, p. 51.
[3] Is. xxviii. 11.
[4] I Cor. xiv. 1–24.
[5] Gal. iii. 16; Gen. xii. 2–3.
[6] Gal. iii. 14.
[7] Rom. iii. 10–18, citing Ps. xiv. 1–3; Ps. liii. 1; Ps. v. 9; Ps. cxl. 3; Ps. x. 7; Prov. i. 16; Is. lix. 7–8; Ps. xxxvi. 1.

ment to Paul's first readers makes it seem fanciful and unconvincing to the modern mind. The argument from allegory can impress only those who prize the imagination as an organ of exegesis or those who delight in discovering in each incident of Old Testament history a premonitory type of the greater revelation which was to come.

Even more characteristic of Paul's habit of mind, and not less transitory in its influence, was the view of the universe, and of the forces controlling it, which Paul shared with the Jews of his own time. He had been taught to see in the spiritual conflicts of life and nature a vast cosmic struggle between evil dæmons and the Divine wisdom. The world as he conceived it was a scene of revolt, where the "potentates of the dark present, the spirit-forces of evil in the heavenly sphere," [1] contended against God. These "dethroned powers who rule this world" had their guilty part in the fate of Jesus and "crucified the Lord of glory." [2] The strategy of God, however, had converted this disaster into a victory, and the dæmonic powers had been defeated by the raising of the Lord of Glory from the dead, and by bestowing on those who accepted him a share in his triumph. "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us," Paul says, "for I am certain . . . no powers

[1] Eph. vi. 12.

[2] I Cor. ii. 6, 8. See, also, the careful and learned discussion of H. B. Carré, "Paul's Doctrine of Redemption," 1914, *e. g.*, p. 21: "His scheme for human redemption is to be understood as a part of the cosmic redemption; *i. e.*, as the freeing of man from the dominion of the dæmonic powers, in particular, Sin and Death."

of the Height or of the Depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to part us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord." [1] It was a stupendous drama which Paul thus saw enacting itself before his eyes, a world-war in heaven and on earth, not unlike that which is portrayed in the splendid imagery of Milton's "Paradise Lost." Yet neither of these monuments of poetic genius can be permanently accepted as an historical narrative. "All this dim world has passed from our minds; this tale of war in the spirit-sphere is for us the merest mythology—'as much a dream as Milton's hierarchies,' wrote John Keats." [2] The war with dæmons, like the argument from Old Testament analogies, can have no part in shaping the theology of the modern world.

Yet, while neither of these influences of contemporary Judaism remains convincing in its details, the effect of each on the mind of Paul has permanent significance. On the one hand, his unbroken attachment to the legends and literature of his own people kindled in his mind an extraordinary sense of historic continuity. His own thinking, with all its swift transitions, had behind

[1] Rom. viii. 37, 39.

[2] T. R. Glover, "Jesus in the Experience of Men," 1921, p. 3. *Cf.* Reitzenstein, "Poimandres," 1904, ss. 79, 80: "It is true that there survives in Paul much of the more general, and to a certain degree, neutral, conception of the elemental spirits held in earlier Judaism. But the 'Rulers of the world' are recognized as evil spirits, who in their conflict with God have accomplished the crucifixion of Christ. Their rule will, however, end on that day when God regains his dominion."

it this sense of cosmic unity, and became a growth rather than a fixed system, a flowering from the root of a sacred faith. Paul did not outgrow his past; he grew out of it. The Divine plan for Israel was not, in his thought, abandoned at the coming of Christ; it was fulfilled. The universe was not taken by surprise when the new faith arrived; it had been waiting "with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed." [1] "The Law thus held us as wards in discipline, till such time as Christ came." [2] All this brings Paul very near to a habit of mind which is characteristic of the modern world, and which views the universe as expectant, premonitory, prophetic. What is now called teleology is but a modern restatement of Paul's great affirmation of the "secret purpose which after the silence of long ages has now been disclosed." [3] Paul, that is to say, writing in the picturesque and dramatic language of a seer, rather than with the precision of a man of science, anticipated much that is now called evolution. "Creation as well as man," he said, "would one day be freed from its thraldom to decay and gain the glorious freedom of the children of God." [4]

A similar kinship with modern thought is exhibited by Paul through the practical effect of his belief in evil spirits. Remote and grotesque as such a cosmology may now appear, it is based on the permanent fact of contention and struggle in the moral, not less than in the physical, world.

[1] Rom. viii. 19.
[2] Gal. iii. 24.
[3] Rom. xvi. 26.
[4] Rom. viii. 21.

As Paul's thought grows more definite, this sense of a cosmic conflict becomes less materialized and impersonated, yet the spiritual warfare which the universe exhibits remains for him the central problem of life. Neither the tragic aspects of history, nor the personal struggles which rend the individual soul, are evaded or minimized. "I want to do what is right, but wrong is all I can manage; I cordially agree with God's law . . . but then I find quite another law in my members, which conflicts with the law of my mind. . . . Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? " [1] This personal conflict is, however, boldly interpreted by Paul as a contention of man against the Divine purpose for him, and calls for the stern discipline of God. "God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the impiety and wickedness of those who hinder the truth." [2] And beyond all these spiritual dissensions within humanity are the vast campaigns of God Himself against "the prince of the air—the spirit which is at present active within those sons of disobedience among whom all of us lived." [3] In a word, what the modern world has come to call the struggle for existence is anticipated by Paul as a vast drama in which all nature and life are involved. The world is to him no soft and easy place, but "sighs and throbs with pain. . . . Even we ourselves, who have the Spirit as a foretaste of the future, even we sigh to ourselves as we wait for the redemption of the body that means

[1] Rom. vii. 21–24. [2] Rom. i. 18. [3] Eph. ii. 2–3.

our full sonship." [1] Human life, like the world in which it is set, is, therefore, a place, not for cowards, but for the brave. "It was trouble at every turn," Paul says, "wrangling all round me, fears in my own mind." [2] Out of the mythology of dæmons he snatches the permanent truth that the evil in the world and in one's self is a challenge to the courageous. His view of the world is more akin to that of a Greek tragedian than of a modern optimist, and it lifts his teaching out of all feeble sentimentalism, and makes it a summons to the heroic life. There were dæmons enough left in his own members and in a corrupt Corinth or Rome to demand all his fortitude and self-control. He must, as the letter to Timothy, quite in the spirit of Paul, announced, "fight in the good fight of the faith." [3]

There remains a still more striking instance of Paul's gift for appropriating, and then transforming, the material of Hebrew tradition. It is his dealing with the hopes which were current among his people for a speedy end of the existing

[1] Rom. viii.22–23.

[2] II Cor. vii. 5.

[3] I Tim. vi. 12. Since this page was written, the Pauline summons to courage has been repeated in L. P. Jacks's striking little volume: "Religious Perplexities," 1922, *e. g.*, pp. 29, 37, 38. "The life of this heroic spirit is religion in being. . . . A free soul . . . finds his own nature exquisitely adapted to the nature of the universe as dangerous,—on that side the ringing challenge, on this the joyous response, man and the universe engaged together as loyal confederates in the task of creating a better-than-what-is."

order of the world. Through the later history of Israel, two types of teaching concerning national destiny may be traced, at times intermingled, seldom definitely contrasted, yet easily distinguishable in nature and effect. On the one hand was the message of the prophets,—ethical, spiritual, universal. Jehovah says "unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live." [1] "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." [2] "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." [3] On the other hand was the persistent anticipation, strengthened by suffering and sustained under persecution, that Israel must have her speedy justification and triumph, and that Jehovah, as the God of a chosen people, was pledged to restore her primacy and glory. "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen." [4] "And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together." [5] "This shall be the punishment. . . of all nations that come not up to keep the feast." [6] "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." [7] As outward circumstances grew less propitious this national hope grew more eager and confident, and for more than a century before the Christian era the final glorification of Israel was announced as preordained. The sufferings of each successive generation confirmed this anticipation of the

[1] Amos. v. 4.
[2] Mal. iv. 2.
[3] Is. xl. 31.
[4] Obadiah 15.
[5] Zech. xiv. 14.
[6] Zech. xiv. 19.
[7] Joel iii. 17.

Messiah's approach. "The first heaven shall depart and pass away, and a new heaven shall appear." [1] "And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that he shall return to glory." [2] This sense of expectancy may be traced in the synoptic Gospels, where in prolonged discourse the woes of the present age are interpreted as prophecies of a Messianic reign; [3] and after the death of Jesus the first disciples hoped "that he would be the redeemer of Israel," [4] and would "restore the Realm to Israel." [5] Into this apocalyptic hope Paul was born, and in his teaching the anticipation is repeatedly expressed, that "the day is almost here;" [6] that "the interval has been shortened," [7] and that he and his friends are "waiting till our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed." [8] Through all the generations since, successive waves of the same great expectation have swept at times over large areas of Christian piety, and even after their subsidence the driftwood of this millennial hope has been left stranded at many points of Christian life and literature, as in the prayer of the Anglican Burial Service, "That it may please Thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy Kingdom."

Yet while these evidences of Messianic expectation are abundant in Paul, the deeper note of

[1] I Enoch xli. 16.
[2] II Baruch xxx. 1.
[3] Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi.
[4] Luke xxiv. 21.
[5] Acts i. 6.
[6] Rom. xiii. 12.
[7] I Cor. vii. 29.
[8] I Cor. i. 7.

spiritual and ethical teaching is not less audible, and by degrees becomes his dominating hope. The social pessimism which is the logical consequence of apocalyptic dreams, and which at first oppressed Paul's spirit, becomes supplanted by social confidence. Instead of writing as he did to the Thessalonians that "the Rebellion takes place first of all, with the revealing of the Lawless One," [1] he writes to the Romans of a personal and moral regeneration through "God's saving power for everyone who has faith." [2] "The law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death." [3] These divergent ways of appeal and instruction might seem to suggest a divided mind in Paul, and the question has been often and hotly debated whether the substance of his teaching is to be found in apocalyptic anticipations or in ethical and spiritual commands. Neither of these alternatives would seem, however, to be inevitable. Both assume fixity and continuity in a teaching which is in an extraordinary degree fluid and developing. In this aspect, as in many others, the thought of Paul is a living growth, which as it gets firmer root bears a fairer flower. The external anticipation is at first in control. "The Lord himself," he writes in his earliest letter, "will descend from heaven with a loud summons; . . . the dead in Christ will rise first." [4] By degrees, however, the mind of Paul wakes from these materialized

[1] II Thess. ii. 3.
[2] Rom. i. 16.
[3] Rom. viii. 2.
[4] I Thess. iv. 16.

dreams into the consciousness of spiritual communion, and the better world is looked for, not in a cosmic catastrophe, but in a spiritual commonwealth. "The Reign of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, it means righteousness, joy, and peace in the holy Spirit." [1] The new Israel is not to be a restored nation, but a sanctified church. "Now if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring." [2] Thus the hope of a millennial future is gradually merged in the sense of intimacy with the Eternal, until finally, in the letter to the Ephesians, it is announced that God "has granted us complete insight and understanding of the open secret of his will, showing us how it was the purpose of his design so to order it in the fulness of the ages that all things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ." [3] The millennial expectation is thus for Paul not a place of rest, but a point of departure. Like his other intellectual inheritances, it becomes transformed and spiritualized as he applies it to the enrichment of his own faith.

When one turns from these influences of contemporary Judaism which affected the theology of Paul, and observes the contact of his mind with the ideas and traditions of the Hellenic world, the same gift for appropriation and assimilation is to be observed. The process indeed proceeds so far that the new faith becomes at many points indistinguishable from the cults and creeds which it supplants, and a Palestinian gospel seems trans-

[1] Rom. xiv. 17. [2] Gal. iii. 29. [3] Eph. i. 9–11.

formed into a mystery-religion. This momentous transition from the call of Jesus to repentance to the sacramental cult of a descending Saviour certainly presents, as has been already remarked, a perplexing situation. On the one hand, it was this bold appropriation of the mystery-religions which rescued the new faith from the fate of a Jewish sect, and gave it a footing in the Roman world. "Christianity," one of the most distinguished of modern scholars has said, "overcame the competing religions of the East, because it Hellenized itself more thoroughly than they." [1] The cosmic drama conceived by the fertile mind of Paul as verifying the speculations of Oriental mysticism has survived as the Christian plan of salvation, and has become formulated in many Christian confessions. On the other hand, this sublime conception,—this descending God, this redemptive sacrifice, this ritual of the initiated,—which has become incorporated in elaborate schemes of Christian theology, was in its origin not only very different from the plain story of the teaching of Jesus, but in large part derived from sources altogether foreign to that primitive tradition. It was a composite creation, a work of genius, translating a Galilean idyl into a cosmic drama. Startling in its novelty as such a teaching may have been to the little company of Palestinian Christians, it appealed by its very affinity with current

[1] Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, "Die griechische Literatur des Altertums" (Die Kultur der Gegenwart I. viii.) 3 te Aufl. 1912, s. 135.

ideas to the greater audience of the Roman world.[1]

If, then, Paul's training as a Jew inclined him to fanciful analogies, to imagine the world beset by dæmons, and to look for its speedy dissolution; and if, again, his contact with diversified cults led him to merge the simple story of the Gospels in the vast conception of a cosmic mystery, must not his theology be regarded as altogether remote and impracticable, if not fictitious and grotesque? On the contrary, it is precisely when one thus recognizes the temporary aspects of Paul's thought that its permanent elements become most impressive. Through the inevitable limitations of race, language, and philosophy, from which the modern world has in the main detached itself, there issue conceptions of God, of the universe, and of the "one intermediary between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,"[2] which have not only remained of undiminished reality, but meet at many points with peculiar timeliness the needs of the modern

[1] *Cf.* E. Hatch, "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages," 1892, p. 350: "I venture to claim to have shown that a large part of what are sometimes called Christian doctrines, and many usages which have prevailed and continue to prevail in the Christian Church, are in reality Greek theories and Greek usages changed in form and colour by the influence of primitive Christianity, but in their essence Greek still."

W. Bousset, "Jesus der Herr," 1916, s. 62: "I cannot see how the veneration of the Lord, sacraments, and the impressive phenomena of pneumatic ecstasy, the fundamental characteristics in Christian worship, can be derived from the synagogue."

[2] I Tim. ii. 5.

world. An American scholar, writing of the teaching of Jesus, has lately pointed out that it had two elements, which appear inconsistent with each other, though both are profoundly true: "It was meant to be the standard for the future kingdom of God, but . . . he also intended his followers to live by those principles here and now." In other words, "the Christian is to live as though for him the kingdom of God had come." [1] Something of the same twofold character is to be observed in the teaching of Paul. His theology was composite, Hebraic and Hellenic, apocalyptic and redemptive; but these contemporary influences could not overcome the sanity of his mind. The Christian was to live according to the mind of Christ. Speculations concerning the universe should not detach him from the simplicity of Christian obedience. The significance of Paul's theology is realized, not as one concurs in his cosmic anticipations, but as one penetrates through these forms of thought to the experience which they are designed to hold. The sense of an approaching cataclysm did not tempt Paul, as it does the millenarians of the modern world, to indifference concerning moral reforms. On the contrary, it steadied his moral code, as one stiffens his muscles to meet an approaching storm. The apocalyptic drama did not leave him ethically drowsy; on the contrary, he woke from it to be ready for that great day when his dream might

[1] H. J. Cadbury, "The Social Translation of the Gospel," Harv. Theol. Rev., Jan. 1922.

come true. "The Pauline explanations of fact which we call doctrine," it has been remarked, "had elements of weakness, but in the perception of fact he is supreme. . . . He sees realities through mere temporary phenomena." [1]

The permanent element thus disclosed in Paul's theology meets one, first, in his doctrine of God. He had inherited the legal and imperial tradition of Judaism. Jehovah had issued his decrees of personal and national righteousness, and it was for man to accept and obey them. The transforming experience of Paul's conversion opened his eyes to quite another view of the Divine character. The God who had thus revealed Himself was a generous and persuasive God, anticipating man's obedience by a Divine initiative, as the father of the prodigal saw his son a long way off and ran with parental love to meet him. Out of the Psalms and Prophets Paul had seized on one phrase which touched this deeper note and expressed his new conviction. His God was a "living God." His soul had thirsted for the living God,[2] and that thirst had been satisfied. His heart and flesh had cried out for the living God,[3] and that cry had been not only heard but anticipated. "The gospel we are preaching to you," Paul is reported as saying at Lystra, "is to turn from such futile ways to the living God." [4] His message was, he said, that of Hosea: "There shall

[1] Percy Gardner, "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," 1911, p. 230.

[2] Ps. xlii. 2. [3] Ps. lxxxiv. 2. [4] Acts xiv. 15; *cf.* I Thess. i. 9.

they be called 'sons of the living God.'" [1] He had, in short, found a God who cared for men,—"the God of all comfort, who comforts me in all my distress." [2] The same God who had said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," [3] had shone into his heart. God's government was not remote and imperial; it was intimate and individualized. "For us there is one God, the Father, from whom all comes, and for whom we exist." [4]

This antecedent and unearned generosity of God involved for Paul a new understanding of the very nature of religion. What he had discovered was not so much the solution of a problem as the offer of a gift. No word is more repeatedly on his lips than the word Grace. "By God's grace I am what I am; . . . not I but God's grace at my side." [5] "Through him we have got access to this grace." [6] Here was a new chronology of the religious life,—first, the condescending and prevenient grace of God, "the surpassing grace which God has shown," [7] and then the welcome of this gift by the receptive will; first the call of God and then the answer of man; first, the descending revelation and then the ascending faith. "You know God," Paul writes to the Galatians, and then, as though he corrected himself, adds, "or rather, are known by God." [8] Antecedent to the knowledge of God was the assurance that one is known of

[1] Rom. ix. 26; Hosea i. 10.
[2] II Cor. i. 3–4.
[3] II Cor. iv. 6; *cf.* Gen. i. 3.
[4] I Cor. viii. 6; *cf.* Mal. ii. 10.
[5] I Cor. xv. 10.
[6] Rom. v. 2.
[7] II Cor. ix. 14.
[8] Gal. iv. 9.

Him. Round about one's ignorance was the fortifying sense that one is not alone, but is sought for by the grace of God.

This intimacy with a living God is so complete and confident in Paul that he boldly calls it an "Adoption," as of a father adopting a son. "You have received the Spirit of sonship." [1] "He chose us . . . , destining us in love to be his sons." [2] It is as though a child had been lost and were adopted in a kindly home. Paul's theology, in a word, begins, not with man's search for God, but with God's search for man. We think God's thoughts after Him. This spiritual chronology distinguishes Paul's teaching from all contemporary forms of philosophical speculation, and gives it a place among the great confessions of the religious life. There is, as Schleiermacher reaffirmed, no other starting point for religious experience than in this sense of dependence. The only wise theologian is he who knows, first of all, that God knows him.[3]

But does not this exalted theism encounter a

[1] Rom. viii. 15.

[2] Eph. i. 4–5.

[3] *Cf.* J. Weiss, "Die Bedeutung des Paulus für den modernen Christen," in Zeitschrift für die N. T. Wissenschaft, 1919–20, s. 136. "This conception of God as Will, conscious of the intent to lead us to perfect holiness, purity, and godliness, is the permanent result of the religious experience and thought of Paul, and so far as one can define Christianity this conviction must be in some degree present. Indeed, one may even say that wherever the faith exists that this is the meaning and the goal of events, there Christianity as St. Paul understood it still exists."

new moral danger? Does not this absolute sovereignty of God, with its compelling initiative, threaten the freedom of the human will, so that faith may become indistinguishable from fatalism? Such was the peril encountered by Calvin in his doctrine of decrees. "The Divine will," he teaches, "is the cause of everything that exists. . . . The will of God is the highest rule of justice, so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it. When it is asked why the Lord did so, the answer must be, 'Because he willed it.'" [1] The same startling proposition is repeated in the Westminster Confession: "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass. . . . By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." [2] It was an astonishing inference from Paul's great proclamation of the "glorious freedom of the children of God," [3] and his sublime assurance that "those who love God, those who have been called in terms of his purpose, have his aid and interest in everything." [4] The Institutes of Calvin were primarily concerned with the interpretation of God's will for man; the letters of Paul, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with the dedication of man's will to God. It is for the conduct of this life that, according to

[1] "Institutes," Book iii. ch. 23, Sec. 2.
[2] Ed. 1647, Ch. iii. 1, 3.
[3] Rom. viii. 21.
[4] Rom. viii. 28.

Paul, God calls those whom He has decreed, and justifies those whom He has called. Each task now fulfilled is an answer to God's call; each life is a vocation. God's purpose will be fulfilled, through man, if he will, but in spite of man, if he resist. There is to Paul no contradiction between the affirmation, "By grace you have been saved, as you had faith; it is not your doing but God's gift," [1] and the opposite declaration, "Work all the more strenuously at your salvation." [2] The one teaching is written, Paul says, "that no person may boast in the sight of God;" [3] the other reënforces resolution with the assurance, "It is God who in his good will enables you to will this and to achieve it." [4] Each life, that is to say, has its place in the Divine order. Each nation has its part in God's plan. Each righteous act is suggested by the Divine initiative. Conduct becomes the language of faith; ethics is merged in religion; until, in Paul's bold phrase, we may "become the righteousness of God." [5] Through glad coöperation with the Divine will, but not less surely through human resistance or defeat, the great design of the living God is to be fulfilled, His kingdom established on earth as it is in heaven, and His children finally conformed to the image of His son. This is not Paulinism only; it is rational religion. The distinction of religion from morality is in this conscious participation with the universal order. "We work together in God's service;" [6]—

[1] Eph. ii. 8.
[2] Phil. ii. 12.
[3] I Cor. i. 29.
[4] Phil. ii. 13.
[5] II Cor. v. 21.
[6] I Cor. iii. 9.

that is the summary of all reasonable religious faith.

From this point of association with the Eternal Purpose Paul's theism advances until it anticipates much which might seem to be the peculiar possession of modern thought. When, for example, Tennyson concludes his "In Memoriam" with the confession:

> "That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves,"

he is but repeating the assurance of Paul that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." [1] Or when, again, a modern philosopher defends the teleological interpretation of the universe, or a modern moralist describes his system of evolutionary ethics, he is but reproducing the teaching of Paul that "to this day . . . the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain; and not only so, but even we ourselves, who have the Spirit as a foretaste of the future, even we sigh to ourselves as we wait for the redemption of the body that means our full sonship." [2]

With frequent reiteration, as though always in the background of his mind, and emerging to satisfy special needs, this spiritual interpretation of life and history dominates the thought of Paul. He undertakes, for instance, a series of

[1] Rom. i. 20 A. V. [2] Rom. viii. 22–23.

subtle reflections on the entrance of sin into the world, and how it was that death reigned from Adam to Moses,[1]—problems which the modern world can hardly regard with seriousness; but these reflections on Hebrew history are abruptly displaced by the confident affirmations of a moral evolutionist, and the assurance that "the creation waits with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed." [2] Paul's own experience becomes interpreted under the same general law. "Not that I have already attained," he says; "my one thought is, by forgetting what lies behind me, . . . to press on to the goal for the prize of God's high call in Christ Jesus." [3] The same comprehensive faith reappears in the great declaration of missionary intention which is reported in the Book of Acts. Speaking to the men of Athens, "a most religious people," worshipping "an unknown God," he assures them that the Universal Purpose reveals itself in all devout aspirations and all diversities of worship. "All nations he has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth . . . meaning them to seek for God. . . . Though indeed he is close to each one of us, for it is in him that we live and move and exist." [4]

Nor is even this the final statement of Paul's doctrine of the living God. As his missionary activity slackens, and his mind yields itself to calmer reflection on the nature of the religious life, this controlling sense of the life of God as

[1] Rom. v. 12–14.
[2] Rom. viii. 19.
[3] Phil. iii. 12–14.
[4] Acts xvii. 26–28.

"close to each one of us," or, as Brother Lawrence later called it, this "practice of the presence of God,"—grows more controlling and sufficient, until Paul, the disputant, the conciliator, the emancipator, becomes Paul the mystic, confident that his mission will be accomplished if he may "enlighten all men upon the new order of that divine secret which God the Creator of all concealed from eternity." [1] This attitude of sheer acceptance, or as a modern Friend would describe it, this "surrender of silence," was not, it is true, wholly reserved for Paul's later years. His conversion itself had in it the marks of the mystic's experience, and he records other moments of similar rapture. "I know a man in Christ," he says of himself, "who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven . . . and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat." [2] By degrees, however, this sense of complete sufficiency in the mystical experience becomes more habitual, and Paul's language becomes more and more that of exaltation and illumination through the new discipleship. "Your life," he writes to the Colossians, "is hidden with Christ in God." [3] The *unio mystica* has become to him a satisfying solution of the problem of life. The sources of his spiritual authority are not external or historical, but intimate, immediate, hidden, an acceptance of the life of God by the soul of man.[4]

[1] Eph. iii. 9. [2] II Cor. xii. 2–4. [3] Col. iii. 3.

[4] *Cf.* Evelyn Underhill, "The Mystic Way," 1913, pp. 180 ff. So, J. M. Campbell, "Paul the Mystic," 1907.

Such was the habit of mind which gave form and beauty to Paul's theism. Nothing could be more remote from the procedure of a consistent and logical theologian. There is less of Calvin than of Spinoza in Paul, more of St. Augustine's "Confessions" than of St. Augustine's controversy with Donatists and Pelagians. Paul, in his most characteristic mood, is the forerunner of that great company of mystics who have found God, without mediation of creed or cult, through direct communion and spiritual insight. "The gospel that I preach," said Paul, in words which might have been spoken by Tauler or George Fox, "is not a human affair; no man put it into my hands; no man taught me what it meant, I had it by revelation of Jesus Christ." [1]

At this point, however, is disclosed a further element in Paul's theology which gives it an unprecedented character. This sense of intimacy with the living God, from which he derives his confidence and courage, has been attained, not through a process of reasoning such as might satisfy a modern theologian, nor yet through direct

[1] Gal. i. 11–12. In a personal letter, quotation from which is permitted, Principal L. P. Jacks writes: "Paul seems to me to have combined the last insight of Jesus with the Platonic vision of the redeemed creation (by no means the human race alone), and the resurrection-life of the city in heaven, apprehended as a real, near, ever present fact, thinly veiled under the 'seen and temporal.' Thus Paul, as I understand him, preached the gospel of the universal transfiguration, which as a Platonist I have believed in for years, and in the light of which alone I can find any meaning in the saying that our light afflictions are but for a moment."

communion with God such as the modern mystic claims, but by the transforming fact of a single spiritual experience, which has opened his eyes to see the design of God for man. All that Paul knows of the Eternal Purpose he has come to know through "faith in Christ" and the "power of his resurrection." [1] Paul's theology is essentially a Christology. His theism is an answer to "that open secret which, though concealed from ages and generations of old, has now been disclosed to the saints of God . . . in the fact of Christ's presence among you as your hope of glory." [2] Here is no mere personal loyalty, such as the Gospels inculcate, nor the unmediated mysticism which satisfies many modern minds, but a new mystery-religion, a "transfiguration of the Gospel." "The disciple clothes the message of the Master in the forms of the Hellenistic religions of personal redemption whose atmosphere had surrounded him from boyhood, and whose phraseology was current coin within the Gentile world to which he preached." He uses "the very vernacular of the mystery-cults," [3]—"that hidden wisdom," "the mysterious wisdom of God," [4] "God's secret purpose." [5] To be "crucified with Christ," [6] to be "baptized into his death," [7]—phrases like these could have significance only to those who

[1] Phil. iii. 9, 10.
[2] Col. i. 26–27.
[3] Bacon, "Jesus and Paul," 1921, pp. 53, 58, 75.
[4] I Cor. ii. 7.
[5] I Cor. ii. 1.
[6] Gal. ii. 20.
[7] Rom. vi. 3.

had been antecedently familiar with similar beliefs.

Yet this exaltation of Christ as conceived by Paul does not reach the point at which the Church was soon to arrive. The deity of Christ is not a Pauline doctrine. "A Hebrew of the Hebrews" could not depart so far as this from his faith in the "one God, the Father, from whom all comes, and for whom we exist." [1] Paul's monotheism is consistent and reiterated. "Blessed forevermore be the God who is over all," [2] he says in a much debated passage; and again to the Philippians, "Every tongue [shall] confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father." [3] God, to Paul, is the transcendent source; Christ is the intermediary agent. Thus Paul's Christ is at once exalted and subordinated. He is "the firstborn of a great brotherhood." [4] A new title is applied to him; he is the "Lord" (*Kurios*). It was a term familiar in mystery-worship, applied to the gods of Egypt and Asia Minor, and even assumed by Roman Emperors as indicating their divine rights; yet the title, though it justified divine attributes, did not imply Deity itself. "The more exalted the idea of the supreme deity, the more need was felt of some intermediary between Him and the world of creation and provi-

[1] I Cor. viii. 6. [2] Rom. ix. 5.

[3] Phil. ii. 11. *Cf.* Juncker, "Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus," II, 1919, s. 1. "Of the monotheistic character of Paul's religion no doubt is possible. (Rom. iii. 29 f.; xi. 36; I Cor. viii. 4 f.)"

[4] Rom. viii. 29.

dence. Such divinity did not conflict with monotheism." [1] The mission of Christ will be at last fulfilled, and "the Son himself will be put under Him who put everything under him so that God may be everything to everyone." [2]

[1] G. F. Moore, "History of Religions," II. 126.

[2] I Cor. xv. 28. *Cf.* C. H. Toy, "Judaism and Christianity," 1890, p. 429: "The Lord Jesus is thought of as sitting on the right hand of God and controlling the destinies of men. . . . Yet on the dogmatic side this exaltation of Jesus is always in the Pauline period distinguished from deification." So Bousset, "Kyrios Christos," 1913, s. 185: "Of the deity of Christ it cannot be affirmed that Paul speaks. He obviously avoided the word God (θεός). . . He speaks without reserve of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He defines God as 'the head of Christ, as Christ is the head of man' (I Cor. xi. 3); and subordinates Christ to God, as the Church is subordinated to Christ (I Cor. iii. 22 f.). . . And yet the dogma of the deity of Christ is on its way (*auf dem Marsch*). . . . Though Paul may follow his Hebrew instincts, and avoid predicating the deity of Christ, and maintain the distinction between θεός and κύριος, popular faith would easily pass by these troublesome differences and openly affirm the great mystery of the deity of Christ, setting it in the centre of the Christian religion." *Cf.* Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 53 ff.: "One obvious way of safeguarding monotheism was to insist on Christ's subordination to the Father, and this Paul consistently does. Nowhere does he call him God. Not till a later day did the Church cast aside this reserve."

Mr. Gladstone, in a surprising paragraph of his "Proem to Genesis," reaches a still more sweeping conclusion: "It may be we shall find that Christianity itself is in some sort a scaffolding, and that the final building is a pure and perfect theism, when the kingdom shall be 'delivered up to God,' 'that God may be all in all.'" "Gleanings of Past Years," 1898, VIII. p. 72. It is characteristic of this distinguished author that he proceeds in a footnote to add: "My intention was simply to conform to the declaration of St. Paul. Whatever may go beyond that, I disavow and retract."

Yet, though Paul does not consciously abandon his inherited monotheism, the tide of his emotional loyalty sweeps him higher and higher in waves of mystical utterance. In Christ is the visible demonstration of the life of God in the soul of man; in Christ is the human manifestation of God's eternal purpose; the grace of God is manifested in the person of Christ. The Christology of Paul does not reach the high-water mark of the Fourth Gospel, but it rises toward that sublime conception of a descending *Logos*, which "became flesh and tarried among us," with a "glory such as an only son enjoys from his father." [1] The Fourth Gospel is a logical corollary of Paulinism.[2]

There is still another phase of this exaltation of Christ in the thought of Paul. As his mysticism

[1] John i. 14.

[2] *Cf.* Lake, "Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity," 1920, pp. 120 ff. "This is especially true of the later Epistles. In them, as distinct from the earlier Epistles, we have a cosmical Christology which regards Christ as a pre-existent divine person who became a human being. . . . An identification of this pre-existent being with the Logos of the philosopher was gradually approached in the later Epistles, and finally made in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel."

Cf., also, a letter of T. T. Munger, in W. S. Rainsford, "The Story of a Varied Life," 1922, p. 375: "St. Paul hit the matter exactly when he said that 'Henceforth I know Christ no more after the flesh.' Christ became a spiritual fact and force to him. I verily believe that in his higher and more spiritual moods, the outward realities and verities of Christ's life vanished, and the spiritual realities and verities that lay behind the forms became the only things he regarded. It is not a new experience, but it is repeated in every man that finds himself."

becomes more explicit, and his sense of Divine communion more controlling, the spirit of God which illuminates and guides his life becomes more and more identified with the spirit of Christ. What was at first accepted as a revelation of Jesus becomes merged in the consciousness of God, until, in Paul's later utterances, no clear distinction is made between what the Church later defined as the Holy Spirit and what Paul accepts as the spirit of Christ.[1] "You are in the Spirit," he says to the Romans, "since the Spirit of God dwells within you;" but immediately adds, "anyone who does not possess the spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."[2] "There are," he says to the Corinthians, "the same Spirit . . . the same Lord . . . the same God who effects everything in everyone."[3]

This identification of Christ with the Spirit of God[4] involves, however, a further doctrinal position, which is by no means that of the later Church. If in one aspect Paul falls short of later orthodoxy, in another he exceeds it. On the one hand, his Christ is less than God; on the other hand, this supernatural Christ has forfeited his nature as man. There is little left of the humanity of Jesus in the Pauline Christ. It would be impossible to reproduce from the Epistles the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Of the teaching of

[1] II Cor. iii. 17. [2] Rom. viii. 9. [3] I Cor. xii. 4–6.

[4] So Troeltsch, "Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen," 1912, s. 59. "Mit dem Gottesgeist identischen Pneuma-Christus."

Jesus, his healing, his acceptance of publicans and sinners, his prayers, his agony in Gethsemane, there is scarcely an intimation in the Epistles of Paul. Only once do Paul's letters directly quote a saying of Jesus.[1] Only twice, and in merely incidental relations, do they cite the Lord's authority —once concerning marital desertion,[2] and again to justify the support of preachers.[3] The spiritual insight, the ethical maxims, the exquisite parables, the intimate communion of Jesus with his Father, the vision of the Kingdom—all these, which give their peculiar charm to the Gospels, and which for a great proportion of modern Christians have become the basis of discipleship, are of slight concern to Paul, compared with the cosmic scheme which absorbs his mind. The Cross has become, not the end, but the beginning of the mission of Jesus. It stands for Paul at the centre of the entire history of the human race. Christ's life in the flesh is "an episode between a life in glory before his birth and a life in glory after his death." [4] It is not the human life of Jesus which has suggested this majestic conception; it is the product of what the apostle calls a "revelation of Jesus Christ." [5]

So completely transcendental and unhistorical a Christology was not likely to satisfy the mind of

[1] I Cor. xi. 24–25.
[2] I Cor. vii. 10–11.
[3] I Cor. ix. 14.
[4] E. Caird, "The Evolution of Religion," 1893, II. 214.
[5] Gal. i. 12.

the Church when the unstudied simplicity of the Gospels became again appealing; and it was inevitable that these cosmic conceptions of Paul should be supplanted by a renewed emphasis on the humanity of Christ. Instead of anticipating the creeds of the church, Paul's teaching thus became displaced by them; and a series of stately affirmations announced, as of the essence of the faith, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate. Thus the complete preoccupation of Paul's mind by the thought of the risen Christ had the startling result of making the apostle, not so much a Father of the early Church, as an alien in it. The catholic creeds were corrective, rather than confirmatory, of Paul; and the figure of Jesus of Nazareth was restored to history, instead of being little more than a shadow cast by the approaching Christ.

If, then, it be true that Paul's Christology at one point falls short of orthodoxy as later defined, it is not less true that it departs from the same orthodoxy again through its very reverence for the person of Christ. The sweep of Paul's adoration bears him quite beyond what the Church later formulated as the doctrine of the Trinity, and he conceives rather a duality of operation,—"one God, the Father, from whom all comes, and for whom we exist," and "one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom all exists, and by whom we exist." [1] "In Christ the entire Fulness of deity has settled

[1] I Cor. viii. 6.

bodily." [1] The unity of Divine love is manifested in a duality of Divine care. In a single paragraph, Paul writes that nothing "in all creation will be able to part us from God's love," [2] and again, "What can ever part us from Christ's love?" [3] Thus the apostle, "in transferring to the exalted Christ the function of the Spirit, in effect merges the latter in the former. Nowhere in his speculative thought does he contemplate more than a duality." [4]

It must be admitted that something of this merging of functions practically occurs in much modern thinking about the nature of God and Christ. The second person of the Trinity has become for the great majority of Christians a clearly defined object of reverence and prayer, while the place of the Holy Spirit, as a distinct person in the Divine unity, has remained comparatively undetermined and vague. To many minds, this aspect of Deity is but another title for the immediate activity of God the Father, or what Paul might call "the living God." To others, the Holy Spirit has become, as with Paul, practically identified with the permanent influence and inspiration of the glorified Christ. In either case, the resulting belief is not in strict conformity with the generally accepted creeds. A duality in God, rather than a trinity, is affirmed. Thus the Pauline definition is not without risk of committing that theological sin which the Athanasian Creed calls "confounding the persons and dividing

[1] Col. ii. 9.
[2] Rom. viii. 39.
[3] Rom. viii. 35.
[4] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

the substance," and concerning which it assures the sinner that "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." The same ecclesiastical condemnation might not unreasonably be applied to the sublime Christology of Paul himself, and the verdict, "Whosoever will be saved, before all things, it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith," might exclude from hope the great apostle of salvation.

Such, in brief and imperfect outline, was the first attempt to construct a theology out of the Christian tradition. It was the daring achievement of a speculative genius, using the forms of current thought but filling these familiar conceptions with novel and illuminating meaning. Out of a Palestinian memory it made a hope for the world; out of a religion of loyalty it made a religion of redemption. "The secret purpose . . . after the silence of long ages has now been disclosed." [1] The cosmic drama, in which the plan of God for the world was unfolded, had reached its culminating act in the victory of Christ over sin and death.[2]

The first impression made on a modern mind by this vast scheme may well be one of remoteness, if not of unreality. Audacious and magnificent as it is, both its language and its thought are of an ancient world. The war with dæmons, the hope-

[1] Rom. xvi. 25–26.

[2] So Bousset, "Jesus der Herr," 1916, s. 38: "My entire argument is directed to show, that the Christian reverence for its 'Lord' is derived not from a single cult, but from the general environment of the Hellenistic world."

lessness and wretchedness of "the present evil world," [1] of which they are the rulers; the descent of Christ into the scene of conflict; the emptying of himself of his celestial nature in accepting the human form, and the sharing by the believer of his glory, so that we may say that he "becomes what we are, that we through his death may become what he is" [2]—all this sublime plan, with its background of human helplessness and its issue in a dramatic deliverance, is not only difficult to harmonize with a modern view of nature or character, but even difficult to understand; and it is not surprising that it has encouraged those expectant literalists who see in the social and political darkness of the present time the unmistakable signs of an immediate return of the Lord Jesus to judge the earth.

Yet while this cosmic scheme may be at first received by the modern mind with bewilderment or denial, and the form which it assumes may appear fanciful or archaic, the desires which it expresses and the needs which it satisfies are as powerful and persuasive as ever; and what appears to the historian mere mythology may be permanently justified by its interpretation of human nature and experience. The survival of a teaching is quite as likely to depend on its psychological sufficiency as on its historical accuracy. Much modern theology, especially of the so-called "Liberal School," has for this reason remained unconvincing. Its purpose has been to rationalize re-

[1] Gal. i. 4. [2] Wrede, "Paul," tr. 1907, p. 110.

ligion, and to promote what Paul calls a "reasonable service," while, in fact, the great mass of those who are stirred by religious motives are led, not by a sense of reasonableness, but by their emotion and imagination, their hopes and fears.

At this point, the epoch-making significance of Paul's theology comes into view. His cosmology may be archaic and his theism dualistic; but when one penetrates these forms of thought and speech and considers the spiritual problems they are designed to solve, one is met by much which remains permanently and profoundly true. As Archbishop Temple wrote, in 1857, "Our theology has been cast in the scholastic mode, *i. e.* all based on Logic. We are in need of, and we are gradually being forced into, a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain; but nothing can prevent it." [1] Paul's theology is based on psychology. It is an interpretation of his own experience. It has its sources, not in history, but in reflection on life. He looks back with shame and sorrow on a misdirected and bitterly repented past, and the sense of his own sin moulds all his later thought concerning the place of Christ and the work of God. What Paul must have for his own support is a religion of redemption. "Who will rescue me," he says, "from this body of death?" [2] The transition is not "without much pain but nothing can prevent it." On this personal need his mind seizes as

[1] "Memoirs of Archbishop Temple," 1906, II. 517.

[2] Rom. vii. 24.

revealing the primal secret of the universe, and the wings of his soaring imagination lift him from the level of individual experience up to the height of a universal law.

Here is where he both anticipates and satisfies the spiritual need of the modern world. The humble confession which he makes concerning himself must be made, in different forms and degrees, by every candid and self-examining life. Blunders, lapses, misguided ambitions, destructive passions, soil one's memory and stain one's self-respect, and one's fundamental desire must be for a way of cleansing and relief. How, then, shall emancipation and restoration be attained? They must come to all, as they did to Paul, through enlistment in a new loyalty. Sometimes this sense of liberty is for Paul merely a release from the fetters of the Jewish law, which had bound him to its ordinances and traditions. "Listen to Paul," he says, "do not slip into any yoke of servitude." "You are for justification by the law? Then you are done with Christ, you have deserted grace." [1] The same sense of release from the "Law" is felt by many a modern life when, with tragic struggle, it wrestles itself free from the conventional or traditional restrictions of its own time and circumstance, and stands erect and justified in loyalty to the immediate right. A critic of the modern world has said that its cardinal sin is "Law-Morality,"—a satisfaction, that is to say, with prescribed propriety, and a disinclina-

[1] Gal. v. 1–4.

tion or inability to make the ventures of a life of grace. With Paul this sense of escape is, in its most poignant expression, that of release from his own sin. "The law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death." [1] However this deliverance may occur, it has given him a redemptive religion. It may take the form of a mystery, but it speaks the language of repentance, reconciliation, and hope. It means courage, reassurance, deliverance, "a life worthy of your calling." [2] In a word, the theology of Paul transforms a mystery-religion into an ethical religion. "Unmistakable as is the Hellenic influence, the victorious power of the spirit of Jesus and the Hebrew inheritance of the Apostle are seen in clearest light in the 'ethicizing' of prevailing ideas." [3] This moral note is not heard in the Hellenic mysteries. They were supernatural revelations, mythological miracles. Paul appropriates their mythology and claims their revelation, but converts mythology into ethics and visions into obedience. With all his susceptibility to Hellenic ideas he remains a Hebrew of the Hebrews, to whom God forgives "inquity and transgression and sin," and "will by no means clear the guilty." [4] The Law might be condemned by him for its weakness and poverty,

[1] Rom. viii. 2.

[2] Eph. iv. 1.

[3] W. Heitmüller, "Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum," 1911, s. 26.

[4] Ex. xxxiv. 7.

but none the less it had held him as a ward "in discipline, till such time as Christ came." [1] Redemptive religion in its Oriental forms was a drama; Paul converted it into an experience. The mystery-religions were a way of association with God; Paul's mystery summoned him to the service of men.

Thus the theology of Paul, which is, in fact, a reflection on experience, exhibits a cycle of conviction through which his agile mind proceeds. It begins with that personal conviction of guilt and shame which his training as a Jew had encouraged, and which his abrupt conversion made more penitent and absolute. It passes into the larger area of Hellenic traditions and rituals, and claims for the new faith a supreme place among the religions of the time. Finally, Paul's earlier training and instincts reassert themselves, and his cosmic scheme sweeps round in its majestic circle, until it reaches once more the Hebrew tradition, and righteousness becomes to him the test of godliness. In almost every letter, the transition from theological discussion to ethical conclusion is as if he passed from the solution of a problem to its logical corollary. "Therefore, brethren," he says to the Romans; [2] "Hence, as I hold this ministry," to the Corinthians; [3] to the Colossians, "Since then you have been raised with Christ," [4] and to the Philippians, "So then, my brothers." [5] "It would be truer to say,"

[1] Gal. iii. 24.
[2] Rom. xii. 1 A. V.
[3] II Cor. iv. 1.
[4] Col. iii. 1.
[5] Phil. iv. 1.

Professor Edward Caird has remarked, "that the ethical principle in Paul begat the theological, than that the theological begat the ethical." [1] The flight of his thought among the great spaces of theological speculation has not made him incapable of descending to the solid ground of practical morals. A Hebrew when he starts, he is not less a Hebrew when he alights. His theology is a thrilling interlude of daring adventure, between the repentance from which he rises and the exhortations with which he concludes. It is not surprising that Paul's lofty reasoning should have arrested the gaze of the world, as one eagerly watches the evolutions of an airman; but the incidents of his experience which are the best evidence of courage and self-control are to be found, first, at his point of departure, and then in his capacity to land; in the confession from which he ascends, and in the duty to which he returns. The theology of Paul lifts him to a breadth of horizon where few men have ever soared; but the genuineness of his repentance and the sanity of his instructions bring him nearer to the common level of human life. Beneath his theology is his religion, and beyond his theology is his ethics, and each of these has its lesson to teach to the modern world.

[1] "The Evolution of Religion," 1893, II. 202.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

EVEN so brief a survey as has been made of the theology of Paul is sufficient to demonstrate that his subtle arguments and sublime affirmations are not, as they have often been regarded, the central element in his teaching. Within the body of his theology beats the heart of his religion. The great circle of his ideas sweeps round the fixed centre of his faith. His philosophy of the universe and his cosmic conception of the mission of Christ are radii which run outward from an interior and spiritual experience,—bold ventures of his eager mind reaching out to the circumference of his thought with argument and surmise. His theology is the gesture-language of his spirit. Many outposts of Paulinism might be surrendered to the assaults of time and change while the central citadel of Paul's religion might still remain uninvaded and secure.

What, then, was this religious experience of which Paul's theology was the vehement and variable expression? It may be stated in a single word, Christ. The abrupt and complete transfer of his loyalty, the transition from hostility to obedience, had brought him to a sufficient and continuous rule of life. It was not merely venera-

tion for a teacher, like the sentiment of Plato for Socrates; it was a sheer, glad, illuminating communion with the Spirit of the Eternal as revealed in a vision of the Christ. It was like coming out of the dark into the day. "What is old is gone," Paul says, "the new has come." [1] "God who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' has shone within my heart to illuminate men with the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Christ." [2] The evidence which justified the transformation was not historical, but psychological. "If Christ is within you . . ., the spirit is living." [3] The life of the disciple had been merged in the life of his glorified Master,—"It is no longer I who live, Christ lives in me." [4] It was an experience of receptivity, rather than of activity. The initiative was from above.

This active and recreating spirit of Christ soon, as has already been noted, became practically identified by Paul with the spirit of God, and indistinguishable in operation. "You are in the Spirit," Paul writes, "since the Spirit of God dwells within you;" but in the next phrase, as though reiterating the same thought, he proceeds: "Anyone who does not possess the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him." [5] "Christ," a distinguished German scholar has said, "in his revealed nature as a heavenly being, is nothing else than the spirit of God, redeeming from the dæmons and the

[1] II Cor. v. 17.
[2] II Cor. iv. 6.
[3] Rom. viii. 10.
[4] Gal. ii. 20.
[5] Rom. viii. 9. (See also above, pp. 163 f.)

law." [1] Finally, this central experience appears to Paul to reproduce in personal life the same spiritual progress which Christ himself exhibited in his transition from an earthly to a glorified state. The disciple is transformed into the same likeness, "passing from one glory to another—for this comes of the Lord the Spirit." [2]

Paul is thus, throughout his stormy career, at heart a mystic. From the initial experience of his conversion,—passing through what has been described as the "way of purgation" in his silent withdrawal to Arabia, to the "way of illumination," finally attained,[3]—he is the great forerunner of that long procession of idealists, poets, and transcendentalists, who have testified, in varied language and through different creeds, to this immediate communion with the Eternal. "To be in itself alone, and not in being, is to be in God," said the Neoplatonist Plotinus, in the third century. "This therefore is the life of the Gods and of divine and happy men, a liberation from all terrene concerns, a life unaccompanied with human pleasures, and a flight of the alone to the Alone." [4] "Thou needest not call Him from a distance," writes Eckhart in the fourteenth century, "thy

[1] Troeltsch, *op. cit.* s. 60.

[2] II Cor. iii. 18.

[3] *Cf.* Evelyn Underhill, "The Mystic Way," pp. 157 ff. *Cf.* also her later volume, "The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today," 1922.

[4] "Enneades," VI. ix. 11 (in B. Rand, "The Classical Moralists," 1909, p. 175.)

opening and His entering are but one moment." [1] To the same effect, the Dominican Tauler teaches, "I am as certain as that I live and God lives, that if the soul is to know God, she must know Him above time and space. . . . God is nigh to us, but we are far from Him; God is within, we are without; God is at home, we are strangers." [2] Madam Guyon, in the seventeenth century, hears from an unknown Franciscan her call to the same communion: "You are disappointed and perplexed because you seek without what you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will find Him;" [3] and she soon testifies: "The soul, passing out of itself, by dying to itself, necessarily passes into its Divine object. . . . My own experience seemed to me a verification of this." [4] The same testimony is repeatedly given in the confessions of George Fox: "One day when I had been walking solitarily abroad, and was come home, I was wrapped up in the love of God, so that I could not but admire the greatness of His love. While I was in that condition, it was opened unto me by the eternal Light and Power." [5]

Nor has this apostolic succession failed under

[1] Pred. iii. *Cf.* Underhill, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[2] "The History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler." Tr. Winkworth, 1857, pp. 191, 192.

[3] Vaughan, "Hours with the Mystics," Second Edition, 1860, II. 155.

[4] T. C. Upham, "Life of Madam de Guyon," 1851, I. 157.

[5] "Journal," Eighth and Bi-centenary Edition, 1891, I. 14.

the conditions of the modern world. German theology began its modern period in 1799, in Schleiermacher's "Discourses concerning Religion," and their appeal to the "religious life itself, and especially those devout exaltations of the mind in which all activities otherwise known to you are subordinated or almost suppressed, and the entire soul is dissolved in an immediate feeling of the Infinite and Eternal." [1] The same high note is touched in the teaching of Emerson: "The soul gives itself, alone, original and pure, to the Lonely, Original and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads and speaks through it. . . . I am born into the great, the universal Mind. . . . So come I to live in thoughts and act with energies which are immortal." [2]

In short, the great affirmation of Paul, "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ," [3] has been verified by receptive minds, under the most varied conditions of church and creed, and with slight concern for theological or ecclesiastical difference or definitions. The Inner Light, the *Unio Mystica*, the assurance, as William James has said, "that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come," [4]—this is the recurrent and irrepressible faith which breaks through the formalism of each generation into the world of Reality. It is "the

[1] Werke, I., "Ueber die Religion," 1843, s. 160.
[2] "Essay on the Over-Soul," Prose Works, 1853, I. 371.
[3] II Cor. v. 17.
[4] "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 515.

sense of *Givenness*, of *Prevenience*, of a *Grace*, of something transcendent having in part become Immanent to our human world." [1] "We cannot live a moment without being more than ourselves. . . . We make all our advances by trusting the soul's 'invincible surmise.' We keep seeking God because we are all the time finding Him." [2] "It is a blessed thing," Phillips Brooks, with generous sympathy, testified, "that in all times there have always been men to whom religion has not presented itself as a system of doctrine, but as an elemental life in which the soul of man came into very direct and close communion with the soul of God. It is the mystics of every age who have done most to blend the love of truth and the love of man within the love of God. . . . The mystic spirit has been almost like a deep and quiet pool in which tolerance, when it has been growing old and weak, has been again and again sent back to bathe itself and to renew its youth and vigor." [3]

It must be confessed that the history of mysticism abounds in abnormal, unstable, and ecstatic types, in which the stream of emotion has been arrested in a pool of placid quietism. This fruitless agitation of the spirit, this influx of emotion with no outlet to thought or action, has inclined rationalists and moralists to regard the Mystic

[1] F. von Hügel, "Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion," 1921, p. 56.

[2] Rufus M. Jones, "The Later Periods of Quakerism," 1921, I. p. xxxiii.

[3] "Tolerance," 1887, p. 35.

Way as misleading or illusory, and German theology has been led to discriminate between *Mysticismus*, or spiritual intoxication, and *Mystik*, or spiritual insight. The one may be misty rather than mysterious, while the other may be illuminating and sane. It must be admitted, still further, that Paul himself reports occasions of passionate emotion and ecstatic trance, which are not likely to commend his teaching to the critical judgment of modern minds. "While I was praying in the temple," he says, "I fell into a trance and saw Him saying to me. . . . 'Go; I will send you afar to the Gentiles;'" [1] and, again, with details of rapture, vividly recalled after many years, and disguised as the narrative of another life: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. In the body or out of the body? That I do not know: God knows. I simply know that in the body or out of the body (God knows which) this man was caught up to paradise and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat." [2] These early transports and unspeakable communications, which might have reduced the Apostle Paul to the rank of a dreamer or a quietist, are, however, soon supplemented by other habits of mind which completely overshadow this emotional susceptibility, and grow, like fruitful branches, from the deep root of mystical communion. Paul becomes both a thinker and a doer, a teacher of doctrine and a counsellor of conduct; and these instructions and

[1] Acts xxii, 17, 18, 21. [2] II Cor. xii. 2–4.

exhortations often preoccupy the mind of a reader, and leave the experience which lies behind them unobserved. It is as though one broke a bough from a living tree and called attention to the beauty of its bud. Whatever Paul may teach of the nature of God or the duty of man gets its vitality and permanence from the initial experience of mystical insight which had transformed his life. The vigor of his thought and the sanity of his ethics testify to the generative force of his spiritual life.[1]

Here is indicated the test which mysticism must always meet: Is it sterile, self-sufficient, contemplative, inactive; or is it the source of clearer thought and moral power? The mystic may be so dazzled by the vision which he sees that his emotional excitation may become morbid, introspective, and illusory. What seems to him inspiration may be merely hallucination. "Master, it is a good thing we are here," Peter said to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; "let us put up three tents . . . (not knowing what he was saying)." But the Master seemed to be already hearing the cry of the demoniac boy at the mountain's foot, and the "dazzling white" garment was cast aside that the work of healing might be done "when they came down the hill." [2]

[1] So Bousset, "Jesus der Herr," 1916, s. 72: "The entire Pauline theology of redemption and doctrine of human nature is developed from the standpoint of Paul the Mystic" (*vom Standpunkt des Pneumatiker Paulus*).

[2] Luke ix. 33–37.

"Not always on the mount may we
Wrapt in the heavenly vision be;
. . . . . .
The mount for vision; but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown."

Here are at once the peril and the power of the mystic,—the peril of detachment, and the power of vision. If the mystic can bring the inspiration from above down to the task below, then he comes to it with a singular endowment of efficiency. The upland spring hastens to the plain with its refreshment and verdure; the healing of the boy succeeds the transfiguration on the mount. A curious dilemma thus confronts the mystic. He has found the source of all fertilizing religion; but that discovery is vain unless the emotion flows down into thought and life. A religion without this intimate communion with the Eternal is an external tradition rather than a vital experience; a religion which has no outlet into thought and work is as when a sacred Jordan ends in a Dead Sea, on whose surface one may float but whose water one cannot drink. Mysticism is thus either sterile meditation or productive inspiration. Emotion is not an end but a beginning. Its worth is in its consequence. If the mystic use his talent more is added to it; if he hide it there may be taken from him even the vision that he has had.[1] If that

[1] *Cf.* F. G. Peabody, "Mysticism and Modern Life," Harv. Theol. Rev., 1914.

initial experience of intimacy and insight promotes indifference to serious thought or to human service, then it becomes a refuge for dreamers and a retreat from duty. If it clarifies one's thinking and fortifies one's conduct, then its place in the religious life is assured.

Such is the test which the modern world is likely to apply to the mystic's creed. The most distinguished figure, for example, in German theology during the nineteenth century was the preacher, philosopher, and theologian, Schleiermacher. Ethics, æsthetics, dogmatics, church administration, and many other fields of learning have been fertilized for a century by his masterful mind. Yet Schleiermacher was fundamentally a mystic. Moravian pietism was, he said, the maternal womb from which his religious life was born. "To seek and find this [the Eternal] in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all action and suffering and to possess and recognize life itself as existing in this immediate feeling,—that is religion."

The Society of Friends, to name another instance, has been distinguished throughout its history for its contributions to applied Christianity. The first protest made by an American organization against the curse of human slavery was made in 1688 by the Friends at Germantown; the first English petition of the same character was laid, in 1788, by the Quakers before the House of Commons; the causes of the Negro, the

[1] "Ueber die Religion," ed. 1843, s. 185.

Indian, and of peace between nations, have found among the Friends early and determined advocacy. Finally, the same small group of untiring philanthropists has won the gratitude of the world by its generous and judicious service of the afflicted populations of Europe since the world-war. Yet this philanthropic leadership has been attained by the most consistent and unwavering of mystics, whose sufficient authority is the immediate testimony of the Inner Light.[1] The habitual inclination of the Society of Friends to quietism and pacifism seemed likely to arrest its progress, and leave it as in an eddy of the stream of thought in the modern world; but the mystic's faith has found a new channel for itself, even through the desert of war, and has carried to thirsty multitudes, even of hostile nations, an abundant supply of the water of life.

Of this transmission of mysticism to thought and service the career of the Apostle Paul is the most distinguished instance in history. As a theologian, his subtle reasonings concerning God and man have been for multitudes of Christians the test of orthodoxy and the essentials of creeds. As a moral counsellor, his self-confessions and bold exhortations have directed Christian ethics ever since. Yet both thought and conduct are to him channels through which the stream of his religion flows. The secluded spring from which this spiritual confidence emerges is the continuous sense of

[1] *Cf.* the impressive record of social service, from John Woolman to Elizabeth Fry, in R. M. Jones, *op. cit.*, Ch. X.

direct communion with the Spirit of God. This is what gives his theology its confidence and his ethics its sanity;—a hope "which never disappoints us, since God's love floods our hearts through the holy Spirit which has been given to us." [1]

In her notable biography of Lord Salisbury, his daughter, in summing up her father's religious life, describes it as a "personal surrender in love and trust to the living Christ." 'The blood in a man's veins is hidden from view, but a portrait of him which failed to recognize its presence, however faithfully his features might be reproduced, or his anatomy defined, would be but the portrait of a corpse." [2] The same words might be used to describe the religion of Paul. The blood in his veins was that personal surrender to the living Christ, without which no portrait of him would be true to life.

[1] Rom. v. 5. Johannes Weiss, in his posthumous essay, "Die Bedeutung des Paulus für den modernen Christen," (in Zeitschrift für die N. T. Wissenschaft, 1919–20, s. 140), proposes some qualification: " It might even be questioned whether Paul himself takes the mystic's formula, derived from his Hellenistic environment, so seriously as some of his interpreters assert. It is at least very noteworthy that the passage in which he announces it most definitely (Gal. 2^{20}), 'It is no longer I who live, Christ lives in me,' is immediately followed by the interpretation: 'The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.' . . . Here he substitutes for the mystical formula. . . . the language of an 'I-and-thou religion,' the grateful recognition of the loving work of Christ, the acceptance of his grace, and the dedication of one's self to his holy and righteous will."

[2] Lady Gwendolen Cecil, "Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury," 1921, I. 122.

When one recalls the great words which summarize Paul's religion, one finds in each case the marks of this central experience. Grace is that accession of spiritual vitality which man receives from God. "By God's grace I am what I am." [1] The Law includes much more than Hebrew ordinances; it is the symbol of all external compulsion and conventional morality. "Did you receive the Spirit by doing what the Law commands? Did you begin with the spirit only to end now with the flesh?" [2] Faith is not intellectual conformity; still less is it a renunciation of the intellectual life. It is the disciplined obedience of those who "lead the life of the Spirit." [3] "We walk by faith," [4] Paul says. Faith, that is to say, is not a way of talking, but a way of walking. It is the dedication of the will to the Divine intention. It is mysticism fulfilling itself in obedience. It is leading the life of the spirit. A similar emphasis is given to the word Hope. "The ancients," it has been said, "were not pessimists, but they distrusted Hope. . . . St. Paul's deliberate verdict on pagan society, that 'it had no hope,' cannot be lightly set aside. No other religion before Christianity ever erected hope into a moral virtue. 'We are saved by hope' was a new doctrine when it was pronounced." [5]

Finally, there meets one still another word which sums up the sense of mastery attained when faith

[1] I Cor. xv. 10.
[2] Gal. iii. 2–3.
[3] Gal. v. 16.
[4] II Cor. v. 7 A. V.
[5] W. R. Inge, "The Idea of Progress," Romanes Lecture, 1920, p. 27.

meets grace and is justified by hope. It is the great word Power. No word in Paul's writings is more characteristic and reiterated. More than forty times he uses it to define the effect of his new loyalty. "I have met with you in spirit and by the power of our Lord Jesus." [1] "The transcending power belongs to God, not to myself." [2] The life of God had become in Paul, if one may use the language of modern life, a spiritual engine, from which power was transmitted to move the life of the world; and one who brought himself into contact with that source of energy felt an augmentation of vitality and momentum, and was moved, as the letter to the Hebrews later said, "by the power of an indissoluble Life and not by the law of an external command." [3]

In his address on Gladstone Lord Rosebery dwells on the religious faith which sustained the great statesman, but proceeds to point out that this which was "the essence, the savour, the motive power of his life" was applied to the great causes which he defended. When he had convinced himself that a cause was right, it engrossed him, it inspired him, with a certainty as deep-seated and as impervious as ever moved mortal man. To him, then, obstacles, objection, the counsels of doubters and critics, were as naught; he pressed on with the passion of a whirlwind, but also with the steady persistence of some puissant machine." [4] A similar transmission of religious

[1] I Cor. v. 4. [2] II Cor. iv. 7. [3] Heb. vii. 16.
[4] "Miscellanies, Literary and Historical," 1921, I. 258.

power, so abundantly generated as to give momentum to the whole of life, is to be observed in Paul. His faith had a single source, but many, and often remote, outlets of action; and in each case it moved with the passion of a whirlwind and the persistence of a machine.

Here, then, at the heart of Paul's religion, are Grace, Faith, Hope, and Power,—the descending gift of God, the ascending acceptance of man, and the influx of capacity, courage, initiative, and expectancy, as from an unsuspected and subconscious endowment of power. These elements of the religious life have in them nothing that is transient, archaic, Hellenic, or Hebraic. They are, on the contrary, timeless, universal, and verifiable under the conditions of any civilization or age. Theories of redemption change with the passing centuries. Christologies are elaborated or simplified as life grows more complex or learning more profound. Creeds may be reconstructed or spiritualized to express the genuine conviction of thoughtful minds. But the experience of the life of God in the soul of man, where grace meets faith and the contact flashes into power,—this is independent of circumstances and traditions, and a teacher who has confidently borne witness to the transforming effect of this experience remains a trustworthy guide even among the new conditions of the modern world. The theologian is an adventurer among ideas whose depths can never be fully explored. His ultimate confession is that of Job: "Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is

heard of him." [1] Yet, from age to age, the communion of spirit with Spirit remains undisturbed by the vicissitudes of thought, and where grace meets faith power is renewed, amid the instability and temporariness of confessions and creeds, to think straight and to do right; and the modern world may still repeat the Psalmist's thanksgiving, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." [2]

At this point one meets the varied and often obscure expressions through which Paul tries to convey to others the effect on his own mind of fellowship with Christ. Justification, sanctification, propitiation,—these great words have often been applied by ingenious theologians to transform Paul's religion into a kind of legal procedure or ceremonial sacrifice, and have promoted a conception of the Christian life which Paul would have been the last to recognize as his own. Justification was, it is true, often used as a forensic word, indicating an acquittal at the bar; but it is appropriated by Paul to teach, not so much conformity to law as emancipation from it. Having committed one's self to Christ, instead of relying "on outward privilege," [3] one is "justified by faith," and is free from the law. The legal analogy, that is to say, is, in the paradoxical manner of Paul, employed to deny the legal relation. The acquittal of man is in fact an acceptance by God. It is simply God's forgiveness of man's sin, not by law but by grace. The terms of the law are used only to be

[1] Job xxvi. 14. [2] Ps. lvii. 7. [3] Phil. iii. 4.

rejected. "Whatever the Law says, we know it says to those who are inside the Law . . . for no person will be acquitted in His sight on the score of obedience to law." [1] Justification is thus, as has been pointed out, a reiteration, in Paul's academic language, of the teaching more beautifully given by Jesus in his parable of the Pharisee and the publican, and in that of the servants receiving equal pay for varied service. "The merit idea poisons the springs of religious life. . . . God's gifts are for those who come to Him in the right temper and are prepared to use them worthily." [2] Not what one deserves, but what God thinks one needs, is one's reward.

Sanctification, another Pauline word, is, in modern speech, consecration, or holiness,—a consecration to be gained, not by the unaided effort of man, but by the inflooding spirit of God. The Father seeks his children, and they become "saints", not because they are perfect but because they are called by him. "You washed yourselves clean, you were consecrated, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." [3] Completely fulfilled sanctification becomes merged in "sonship" or "adoption." The Christian, that is to say, is not a saint in his own right. He partakes of the righteousness of God. "He will be consecrated and useful to the Owner of the House, he will be set apart for good work of all kinds." [4]

[1] Rom. iii. 19–20.
[2] Morgan. *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[3] I Cor. vi. 11.
[4] II Tim. ii. 21.

The word Propitiation has had a still more changeful history. Like justification, it may suggest a court of justice and a reparation made; or, again, it may recall a ceremonial rite; and it must be admitted that in various passages the conceptions of an angry God and a propitiatory sacrifice linger in Paul's mind.[1] His dominant thought, however, moves on a higher level. The reconciliation is not to be earned or claimed, but is a gift. God does not wait to be propitiated. "It is all the doing of God who has reconciled me to himself." This is what has permitted Paul to be a "minister of his reconciliation." [2] The ancient forms become symbols of the new redemption. "If we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son when we were enemies, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." [3] In a word, the spacious words which Paul utilizes for his purpose, and which have provided such abundant material for theological controversy, exhibit the apostle wresting himself free from the entanglement of the law and feeling the exhilaration and liberty of his new faith. They are no longer legal or ceremonial, but religious, words. "The law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death." [4]

This spiritual transition in Paul is, it must be recognized, not made, as in Jesus, with tranquil self-confidence and unperturbed authority; but

[1] Rom. i. 18; iv. 15; xii. 19.
[2] II Cor. v. 18.
[3] Rom. v. 10.
[4] Rom. viii. 2.

with a harrowing sense of inconsistency, and with repeated reversions of phrase and thought. "The Spirit assists us in our weakness" and "pleads for us with sighs that are beyond words." [1] Yet the consequence is with Paul as with Jesus,—a spiritual elevation from which one may look down on the earlier dispensation and recognize its fundamental simplicity and strength. "The entire law is summed up in one word, in You must love your neighbour as yourself." [2]

With this sense of the acceptance by a perfectly merciful God of an imperfectly consecrated man, Paul attains a substantial quietness of mind which is in constant contrast with the external incidents of his stormy career; and at this point another great word sums up his inner tranquillity, and becomes increasingly conspicuous as his letters proceed. It is the word Peace. However abruptly his letters may leap into controversy or rebuke they begin, as a rule, with the salutation, "Grace and peace to you," and at their close append a prayer that "The Lord of peace himself grant you peace continually, whatever comes." [3] The justification which it is Paul's supreme desire to attain, has as its consequence a sense of peace with God. "As we are justified by faith, then, let us enjoy the peace we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." [4]

[1] Rom. viii. 26. [2] Gal. v. 14.

[3] II Thess. iii. 16. (So Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; II Cor. xiii. 11; Gal. vi. 16; I Thess. v. 23.)

[4] Rom. v. 1.

Here is the final aim of Paul's preaching and teaching. "Peace, then, and the building up of each other, these are what we must aim at." [1] Peace amid turbulent circumstances is the test of faith. "The interests of the Spirit mean life and peace." [2] "The harvest of the Spirit is life, joy, peace." [3] It seems a strange word to apply to so unpeaceful a life as that of a wandering missionary and combative controversalist. Fortitude he might inculcate, or endurance, or even the joy of self-sacrifice, but few lives have been more continuously involved in conflicts, both of body and will, or in what Paul himself calls "wrangling all round me, fears in my own mind." [4] No evidence of Paul's religious sanity is, therefore, more convincing than his reiterated testimony to an interior and unperturbed peace of mind. It is the same tranquillity, attained through struggle and peril, which seemed in Paul's Master a natural and continuous endowment, and made it reasonable to prophesy of him that he would "guide our steps into the way of peace." [5] In each of these lives, remote as they were from each other in temperament and endowment, there is revealed, beneath the restless circumstances of experience, this deeper calm, like the quiet of ocean beneath its surging waves. The great saying reported of Jesus, "Peace I leave to you; my peace I give to you; I give it not as the world gives its 'Peace'," [6] might have been repeated by Paul as the summary

[1] Rom. xiv. 19.
[2] Rom. viii. 6.
[3] Gal. v. 22.
[4] II Cor. vii. 5.
[5] Luke i. 79.
[6] John xiv. 27.

of his message. His promise to those who let their "steps be guided by such truth as we have attained" [1] was: "So shall God's peace, that surpasses all our dreams, keep guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." [2] Far as the prevailing habit of mind in Paul was from that which ruled the life of Jesus, the words recorded of the Master might have been used by the apostle,—"I have said all this to you that in me you may have peace." [3]

Finally, among these marks of Paul's religion, must be observed its extraordinary effect on his thought of immortality; and here, once more, one is met by a striking example of the apostle's expanding and ripening mind. Participation with the spirit of Christ is always, for Paul, a sufficient assurance of spiritual permanence. Having "put on Christ," one may share the destiny of Christ. "Since then you have been raised with Christ, aim at what is above." [4] Immortality, in other words, is not an incident of the future only. One may in this present life "attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained this, or am already perfect, but I am pressing on to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me." [5] The problem is thus transferred from a future world to the present life. The question it raises is not whether when I die I shall live again, but whether I am alive now. "For the mind to be given up to earthly things means death; but for

[1] Phil. iii. 16. [2] Phil. iv. 7. [3] John xvi. 33. [4] Col. iii. 1.
[5] Phil. iii. 11, 12 (tr. Weymouth).

it to be given up to spiritual things means Life and peace." [1] When, however, Paul proceeds from this bold conception of immortality, not merely as a future hope but as a present possession, and directly approaches the problem of the future, his eager mind grasps at varied and even inconsistent forms of proof, swinging through a great arc of reasoning, all the way from the dramatic and materialized teachings of Pharisaism to the most sublimated of Greek ideas.

The abruptness of this oscillation of thought is most conspicuous in the extraordinary contrast presented by the two letters to the Corinthians. In the first (Ch. xv.), the future of the world and of the human soul is pictured in splendid colors within the frame of Hebrew tradition. When Paul asks, "How do the dead rise?" he is but repeating the question of Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" [2] His announcement, "The trumpet will sound," recalls the prophecy of Zechariah, "The Lord God shall blow the trumpet." [3] The great saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory," is a citation from Isaiah.[4] "The first man, Adam, became an animate being" is a reminiscence of Genesis.[5] Through these familiar

[1] Rom. viii. 6, tr. Weymouth. *Cf.* F. C. Porter, "Paul's Belief in Life after Death," in "Religion and the Future Life," 1922, p. 255: "Paul's hope for life after death rests ultimately upon his present dying and living with Christ; that is, upon his present experience of the spirit of Christ, remaking his nature after its own likeness."

[2] Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

[3] Zech. ix. 14.

[4] Is. xxv. 8.

[5] Gen. ii. 7.

allusions, amplified and organized into a personal message, Paul unfolds, in a series of daring analogies, an amazing aggregation of propositions concerning nature and life. The body changes, as does the growing grain; yet every seed has "a body of its own. Flesh is not all the same; there is human flesh; there is flesh of beasts, flesh of birds, and flesh of fish;" yet the "animate body" rises as a "spiritual body;" and this transition is to be "in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call; when the dead will rise imperishable, and we shall be changed."

Nothing could seem more unlikely than that such teaching should be accepted among the conditions and presuppositions of modern life. Its biology, psychology, and prophecy are all alike archaic, Pharisaic, visionary. Nor is the teaching even orthodox according to the standards later accepted by the Church. Its anticipation of a spiritual body does not appear to confirm that belief in a resurrection of the flesh which the creeds soon announced, and of which Tertullian said: "And so the flesh shall rise again, wholly in every man, in its own identity, in its absolute integrity." [1] Its Christology definitely subordinates the person of Christ, and announces that "when everything is put under him, then the Son himself will be put under Him who put everything under him, so that God may be everything to everyone." A programme of eternity thus

[1] Tertullian, "On the Resurrection of the Flesh," ch. lxiii., tr. "Ante-Nicene Fathers," ed. Buffalo, 1885, III. 593.

conceived cannot without much strain be adjusted to modern ways of thought, and Christian worship has been forced to satisfy itself with the spiritual atmosphere of hope and trust which surround these Hebraic details. "As we have borne the likeness of material Man, so we are to bear the likeness of the heavenly Man;" "The victory is ours, thank God! He makes it ours by our Lord Jesus Christ," —promises and prophecies like these are perennially comforting, and reveal the teacher rising above his own teaching, as though Paul threw off the restraints of Paulinism and attained "the glorious freedom of the children of God." [1]

When one passes from the first of these letters to the second, he is met by a remarkable change. Here is a supplementary Epistle, addressed to the same congregation, and offering intimate counsels and urgent exhortations. Yet when the apostle's mind reverts to the problem of immortality,[2] and the hope that "He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise me too with Jesus," his picture of that solemn transitition takes a completely different form. It is as though the dream of the last trumpet and of the imperishable bodies of the dead were completely forgotten, while the thought of spiritual renewal inspired a new teaching of consummate beauty and permanent truth. His picture of immortality is no longer wrought out of the fantastic shapes of Hebrew tradition. He has passed abruptly from Hebraism to Hellenism. His figure of speech becomes Greek. We are, he says, as those

[1] Rom. viii. 21. [2] II Cor. iv. 7–v. 10.

who dwell in a tent, which may at any time be folded away; but when "this earthly tent of mine is taken down, I get a home from God, made by no human hands, eternal in the heavens." It is true that "I sigh within this tent of mine . . . yearning to be under the cover of my heavenly habitation," and that "I would fain get away from the body and reside with the Lord;" but meantime "the slight trouble of the passing hour results in a solid glory past all comparison, for those of us whose eyes are on the unseen, not on the seen; for the seen is transient, the unseen eternal." Could any language be more in contrast with the elaborate programme of the preceding letter, or more completely acceptable to a modern mind? The temporariness of this earthly tent, the permanence of the spirit which has its eye on the unseen,—these convictions and intimations remain the normal content of a rational faith in immortality. The same teacher who has described the future in terms of flesh and trumpets now rises to the restrained and spiritualized interpretation of "the slight trouble of the passing hour."

Is it that Paul has deliberately changed his mind, and designedly abandoned his daring flights of imagination? Is it not rather that we here watch his indefatigable thought penetrating, without consideration of consistency, through the cosmic scene which at first arrests his attention to the deeper realities of life and death, and reaching the very heart of human experience in this

communion with the unseen and eternal? However the change may be interpreted, here, in this almost incidental paragraph, is one of the most striking evidences of the apostle's amazing fertility of mind. Courage and consolation could not be offered in more convincing words than in this confident summons from the earthly tent to the home eternal in the heavens. Christian sentiment repeats the hope of Paul in the familiar lines of James Montgomery:

> "Here in the body pent
> Absent from Him I roam,
> Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
> A day's march nearer home."

The modern mind no longer listens for the last trumpet-call; but realizes as poignantly as ever that the moving tent of its body is pitched, each night, nearer home.

If, then, these conditions and consequences are among the marks of Paul's religion,—a direct communion with the spirit of the Eternal, an entrance through that open door into spiritual confidence, and a glad sense of peace as this threshold of communion is passed—it remains to observe the ways of practical expression which lie before the apostle as he advances in his religious life. There are two forms of utterance which through all religious history have offered themselves to faith. As emotion quickens thought and thought passes into action there may be either an oral or a symbolic expression of the experience attained.

The way of speech is followed in prayer; the way of symbolism is followed in ceremonial or ritual forms. One may approach the inner shrine of worship either with words or with deeds, or with both. Prayer and symbolic acts are the gesture-language of religion.

Nothing is more striking in the story of Paul than the abundant evidence of his habit of prayer. His life of action and his argumentative powers have preoccupied the attention of many students; and he has often been estimated either as a travelling missionary, or as a controversial theologian, or as both. The fact is, however, that as peace of mind lay beneath his tumultuous career, so within his amazing activity of mind and body there was maintained a habitual practice of prayer, restraining his temper and sustaining his hope. At almost every epoch of his experience, Paul may be discovered at prayer, and it certainly affords matter for surprise that this revelation of his character should have been so slightly appreciated or even observed. His prayers are singularly devoid of formalism; they are spontaneous, unstudied, warm with unrestrained emotion. Each of his letters, except the impetuous appeal to the "senseless Galatians," [1] begins, not only with a prayer for grace and peace, but with a prolonged and searching petition of a more comprehensive character. To the Romans he writes: "First of all, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all. . . . God is my witness . . . how unceasingly I always

[1] Gal. iii. 1.

mention you in my prayers;" [1] and even more intimately and tenderly to the Corinthians, in his second letter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts me in all my distress, so that I am able to comfort people who are in any distress by the comfort with which I myself am comforted by God." [2] When he writes to the Philippians, he passes from consolation and comfort to congratulation and joy. "I thank my God for all your remembrance of me; in all my prayers for you all I always pray with a sense of joy for what you have contributed to the gospel from the very first day down to this moment." [3] In still another vein, he begs his friends to join their prayers with his: "Brothers, I beg of you . . . rally round me by praying to God for me." [4] Still again, his counsels and criticisms are softened by a sense of gratitude, and he breaks into a prayer of thanksgiving: "We always thank God for you all when we mention you constantly in our prayers." [5] "How can I render thanks enough to God for you, for all the joy you make me feel in the presence of our God?" [6]

Here is quite another Paul from that expositor of doctrine and critic of morals whom the Christian Church has for the most part remembered. Beneath his subtle reasonings, his vigorous counsels, and his bold appropriation of alien beliefs, was this satisfying and refreshing influence of

[1] Rom. i. 8–10.
[2] II Cor. i. 3–4.
[3] Phil. i. 3–5.
[4] Rom. xv. 30.
[5] I Thess. i. 2.
[6] I Thess. iii. 9.

habitual prayer, testifying to the depths of his religious life. Inadequate and halting his prayer might be, but it was reënforced by the coöperation of God. "We do not know," he says, "how to pray aright, but the Spirit pleads for us with sighs that are beyond words." [1] "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!', it is this Spirit testifying along with our own spirit that we are children of God." [2]

In these deep places of Paul's religious life, the forms of thought and expression which occasionally carry him far from the teaching of Jesus are found to be inadequate, and in his free and personal prayer Paul speaks the language and revives the spirit of his Master. "Do not pray," said Jesus at the beginning of his work, "by idle rote like pagans," [3] and again at the close of his life, "Watch and pray, all of you, so that you may not slip into temptation." [4] What he thus urged upon others was the habit of his own life. "He went up the hill by himself to pray. When evening came he was there alone." [5] "Sit here," he says again, "till I go over there and pray." [6] In the supremely touching report in the Fourth Gospel of his last hours, no other words can help his friends but those of prolonged and poignant prayer. "I pray for them . . . Holy Father, keep them by the power of thy Name which thou hast given me." [7] The same renewal of strength and peace is gained by Paul as he cries, "Abba! Father!" and claims

[1] Rom. viii. 26.
[2] Rom. viii. 16.
[3] Matt. vi. 7.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 41.
[5] Matt. xiv. 23.
[6] Matt. xxvi. 36.
[7] John xvii. 9, 11.

the heritage of the children of God. The barriers of intellect and temperament which divide the Epistles from the Gospels fall away, and in the simplicity and reality of prayer the missionary and his Master meet.[1]

There remains to be observed the second channel through which the religious sentiment may find an outlet into life. It is the way of symbolism. As friendship at its warmest is expressed, not by words, but by a clasp of hands, as love may be sealed by an embrace, so religious emotion, when it lies too deep for words, may utter itself through the gesture-language of worship. This utterance of faith through symbolic acts had already, when Paul began his teaching, taken two forms in the Christian community,—the rite of Baptism and the commemoration of the last supper of Jesus with his friends; and each of these suggestive forms of religious expression was first accepted, and then profoundly modified, by Paul's daring and imaginative mind.

[1] Paul Sabatier, in describing the religious experience of St. Francis of Assisi, has said, "There are religions which look toward divinity and religions which look toward man. . . . In the religions which look toward divinity all effort is concentrated on worship, and especially on sacrifice. . . . Most pagan religions belong to this category. . . . The other religions look toward man; their effort is directed toward the heart and conscience with the purpose of transforming them. With Francis of Assisi, St. Paul, and St. Augustine, prayer ceases to be a magic formula; it is an impulse of the heart. . . . When we reach these heights we belong not to a sect, but to humanity." "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," Eng. tr. pp. xxi ff.

Baptism, or the immersion of the body in water, was, it need hardly be recalled, instituted neither by Paul nor by Jesus himself as a new ceremony, but had been prefigured in the ritual washings and bathings prescribed by the Jewish Law,[1] and practiced by ascetic sects like the Essenes, as the symbol of purification, either from ritual uncleanness or from dæmonic possession. A fine suggestiveness was frequently conveyed in the preference for running water, as in the washing of Naaman in the Jordan; [2] in the New Testament allusion to "living water," [3] and in the waiting at the pool of Bethesda "for the moving of the water." [4] When the strange figure of John the Baptist "came on the scene," preaching in the desert of Judea, "Repent, the Reign of heaven is near," it was a baptism "with water for repentance" to which he summoned the people; [5] and when Jesus, in his turn, "came on the scene from Galilee," he was "baptized by John at the Jordan." [6] Baptism was thus recognized by the early Christian community as a well understood and beautiful symbol of their new loyalty. "Repent," said Peter on the day of Pentecost, "let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," and the record adds: "About three thousand souls were brought in that day." [7]

In the nature of the case, a rite thus conducted could be applied to those only who were ma-

[1] Lev. xi ff.; Num. xix.
[2] II Kings v. 14.
[3] John iv. 10.
[4] John v. 3 A. V.
[5] Matt. iii. 1, 2, 11.
[6] Matt. iii. 13.
[7] Acts ii. 38, 41.

ture enough to make their voluntary confession, and it appears to have been usually celebrated, not according to the formula indicated in the first Gospel,[1] but "in the name of Jesus Christ," [2] or "into the name of the Lord Jesus." [3] Indeed, each act of discipleship was performed in this name.[4] "The trinitarian formula, which appears first in Matthew 28 [19], did not come into use till toward the end of the first century." [5] The convert, through this initiation, simply acknowledged his Lord, and entered into the companionship of a new obedience. Those who were "baptized into Christ" were all "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." [6]

Such was the natural and beautiful ceremony which Paul welcomed at his own conversion. "I have chosen him," it is written that the risen Christ announced, "to be the means of bringing my Name before the Gentiles," and in this spirit Saul, when Ananias laid his hands on him, "regained his sight, got up and was baptized." [7] The rite was apparently not regarded by him as of fundamental importance. "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel." [8] With Paul, as with his Master, the symbol might be delegated or subordinated. "Jesus himself did not baptize; it was his disciples." [9] As Paul, however, reflected on

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] Acts ii. 38; x. 48.
[3] Gal. iii. 27; Acts xix. 5 R. V.
[4] Mark xvi. 17; Luke ix. 49; x. 17, etc.
[5] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
[6] Gal. iii. 26.
[7] Acts ix. 17, 18.
[8] I Cor. i. 17.
[9] John iv. 2.

this traditional form, his vivid imagination seized on its suggestiveness and his mind soared away into a higher, and often cloudy, region of new associations and significations, in which a pledge of piety became transformed into a magical rite, and the symbol became a sacrament. The baptized convert, he says, has "taken on the character of Christ;" [1] he is buried with him through baptism, or "baptized into his death," "so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live and move in the new sphere of Life." [2]

Here is a new conception of efficiency, a new life attained through baptism, a gift received rather than a pledge offered; a genuine participation, as if through death and resurrection, with the spirit of the glorified Lord. The disciple has "died with Christ" and is "raised with Christ." It was to be the unifying act of the Christian community: 'By one Spirit we have all been baptized into one Body." [3] It is not a mere figure of speech which he employs, or a moral regeneration which he describes, but the language of exalted mysticism, announcing a direct participation of the believer in the undying life of his Lord. "You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." [4]

The sources from which Paul derived this new and daring conception of baptism seem to be no longer in doubt. No intimation of this transform-

[1] Gal. iii. 27.
[2] Rom. vi. 3, 4.
[3] I Cor. xii. 13.
[4] Rom. vi. 11.

ing sacrament meets one either in the teaching of Jesus or in the traditions of Hebrew piety. On the other hand, the mystery-religions of the Oriental world, which had already become familiar throughout the Roman Empire, and whose language Paul had already at many other points appropriated and applied, abounded in rites of initiation, through which the neophyte was assumed to be buried and reborn as a participant with the Divine life. The Saviour-God, Attis, Mithra, or Serapis, died and rose again, and his devotees were permitted through baptism to share the same transfiguration, and be "reborn into eternity." [1]

Such seems to have been the tempting circle of foreign ideas which invited Paul's venturesome mind as he committed himself passionately to a new obedience. "Our baptism into his death made us share his burial . . . for if we have grown into him by a death like his, we shall grow into him by a resurrection like his." [2] Does this imply that the simplicity of Christian tradition had been altogether supplanted by the complexity of Hellenic mysticism, and that Paul was in effect rather a worshipper of Mithra or Isis than a disciple of Jesus? On the contrary, Paul's gift for appropriation was

[1] *Cf.* W. Heitmüller, "Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum," ss. 1–21. W. Bousset, "Kyrios Christos," 2 te Aufl., 1921, ss. 107 ff. Morgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 128 ff., 140 ff. Kennedy, "St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions," 1913, pp. 229 ff. Reitzenstein, "Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen," 2 te Aufl. 1920, ss. 56 ff.

[2] Rom. vi. 4, 5.

never more conspicuous than at this point. He utilizes the language and accepts the forms of the mystery-religions for the satisfaction of his imagination; but at once proceeds to enrich them with a moral quality of which Oriental religion gives no sign. The fundamental significance of baptism is with Paul in its call to duty. Hellenic mysticism reacts into Hebrew piety. Though it be true that Paul soars away into the clouds, it is not less true that he makes a safe landing on solid ground. Whatever affinity he has found between the dying and rising of Christ and the spiritual experience of Christ's disciple, there remains in the symbolism of baptism a pledge of moral change. However rashly he may appropriate foreign ritual he remains at heart a Jew. Not ecstatic union with the Divine, but simple righteousness, is his final test. "Anyone who does not possess the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. . . . The spirit is living as the result of righteousness." [1] "You must not," he says again, "let sin have your members for the service of vice, you must dedicate yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life." [2] Thus Paul's eager mind moves, as it were, round a great circle of faith, from simplicity to complexity, and back to simplicity again; from the natural to the supernatural and on to the spiritual; from symbolism to sacrament and on to loyalty. Baptism is first transformed from morals to magic, and then restored to morals.

[1] Rom. viii. 9, 10. *Cf.* Heitmüller, *op. cit.*, ss. 24 ff.
[2] Rom. vi. 13.

"All of you who had yourselves baptized into Christ have taken on the character of Christ." [1] "Our baptism into his death made us share his burial, so that . . . we too might live and move in the new sphere of Life." [2]

The Christian Church has been slow to follow the apostle over the entire course of this long and circuitous way. It has been, as he was, arrested by the suggestiveness of Hellenic mysticism, and its reverence for Christ has perpetuated the Pauline conception of a drama of redemption through fellowship with a descending God. Baptism, thus regarded, becomes an exorcism of evil spirits, or a magical transformation wrought under priestly hands. It is a long way from the simple confession of faith, made through cleansing immersion by a mature convert, to a petition made in behalf of a guileless infant: "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin . . . grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have . . . that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, and . . . that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration." [3] It was this aspect of the Catechism which provoked Samuel Butler,—himself the son of a clergyman and the grandson of a bishop,—to the cynical comment that "the general impression it leaves upon the mind of the young is

[1] Gal. iii. 27.

[2] Rom. vi. 4.

[3] Book of Common Prayer, Church of England, Publick Baptism of Infants.

that . . . the mere fact of being young at all has something with it that savours more or less distinctly of the nature of sin," and even to express regret that "the person who composed it did not get a few children to come in and help him." [1] In a word, the history of baptism, as a form of Christian symbolism, might be described as the history of a struggle, at times successful, but often obstructed, between the spirit of that Master who called a child and "set it among them," saying to his disciples, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never get into the Realm of heaven at all," [2] and the persistent inclination to identify religion with mystery and miracle and to make it an instrument of sacerdotal authority; and it remains for the modern mind to abandon these obstructive claims and to restore to the rite that spiritual suggestiveness and beauty which it originally held.

The second of the symbolic acts which express Paul's religious life was the commemoration of the Lord's Supper; and it is certainly one of the most tragic transitions in history that a form so obviously adopted to represent the intimate unity of Christian discipleship should have become either a barrier of exclusion or a miraculous ceremonial. If the purgation of an infant through sacerdotal benediction has little in common with the spirit of him who said "Let the children come to me;" [3]

[1] "The Way of All Flesh," Amer. ed. 1916, p. 35.
[2] Matt. xviii. 3.
[3] Mark. x. 14.

what can be said of the transformation of an evening meal, interpreted by Jesus as a symbol of affection, into a sacrament imparting through priestly intervention the atoning sacrifice of transubstantiated flesh and blood? Yet this transition, so suprising and so fateful, is in no small degree due to the fervid imagination and glowing rhetoric of the Apostle Paul, and the progress of his thought in this case, as in that of baptism, becomes of the most poignant interest.

The touching story of the Lord's Supper is told in great detail by Paul and by all three of the synoptists; [1] and it is one of the surprising facts of the New Testament that the Fourth Gospel, which dwells so long and lovingly on the last days of the life of Jesus, and reports in such detail the washing of the disciples' feet and the long discourse and prayer of farewell, makes no direct mention of the symbolism of bread and wine. Nothing could indicate more convincingly the later origin of the spiritual lyric which bears the name of the beloved disciple than its inclusion of so much which the earlier evangelists do not report, and its omission of an incident on which they all so tenderly dwell.

If, of the three accounts in the Gospels, that of Mark may be accepted as the earliest tradition, the differences, slight as they may appear, between this report and that of Paul, are singularly suggestive. In Mark there is no allusion to an institutional form or permanent rite, but the natural

[1] I Cor. xi. 23 ff.; Matt. xxvi. 26 ff.; Mark xiv. 22 ff.; Luke xxii. 15 ff.

and, as it would seem, unpremeditated use of the common meal which was the last in which the little group was to share. "As they were eating, he took a loaf and after the blessing he broke and gave it to them, saying, 'Take this, it means my body.' He also took a cup and after thanking God he gave it to them, and they all drank of it; he said to them, 'This means my covenant-blood, which is shed for many; truly I tell you, I will never drink the produce of the vine again till the day I drink it new within the Realm of God.'" [1]

How appealing in itself, and how free from mystical implications, is this straightforward story! The intimate fellowship of the Master with his friends was to be unbroken by his death. They must live together as though he still broke bread with them and gave them the cup. The little community of believers did not forget their Lord's last wish. "Day after day they resorted with one accord to the temple and broke bread together in their own homes." [2] Even as late as the second century the same symbolism, marked by the same restraint, was prescribed for the growing fellowship. The remarkable manual of worship, so fortunately discovered in 1875, and known as the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," describes in detail the primitive practice: "We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. And concerning the broken bread: We thank thee, our Father, for the

[1] Mark xiv. 22 ff. [2] Acts ii. 46.

life and the knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills and having been gathered together became one, so let thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom; for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever." [1]

Here is no mystery, no miracle, no ceremonial ordinance, no allusion to an atoning sacrifice; but a common prayer of thanksgiving for the vine which had been planted, for the life and knowledge made known through Jesus, for the unity of scattered churches, like the one loaf made from scattered seed, and for the spiritual food and drink received "through Jesus thy servant." Such a form of thanksgiving deserved the name of Eucharist. It was a giving of thanks. The simplest elements of daily food became permanent witnesses of the Master's spiritual presence.

When one turns from this elementary symbolism to the narrative by the Apostle Paul, it must, first of all, be recalled that he was not of that little group which met at the first Lord's Supper, and, indeed, was throughout his teaching but slightly concerned to dwell upon the events of the human life of Jesus. So far is he from finding in this commemorative meal the central rite of Christian worship, that in his most systematic treatise, the letter to the Romans, he makes no mention what-

[1] "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," tr. Hitchcock and Brown, 1884, chap. ix.

ever of the Lord's Supper. His thought is fixed on the glorified Christ. His Master has been revealed by dying, rather than by living. When Paul says, "I passed on to you what I received from the Lord himself," [1] he seems to be reporting a vision rather than describing a reminiscence. In a word, Paul takes the symbolism of the Lord's Supper as he finds it already accepted by the Palestinian community, and his impetuous imagination proceeds to give it a deeper meaning and a warmer coloring. Of the bread he writes that Jesus said: "This means my body broken for you," and of the wine: "This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood," and of both it is added, "As often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he come." [2] Here enters a new significance into the rite, of which the primitive tradition gives no sign. "Broken for you" recalls the crucifixion of Jesus, as in the saying, "Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed." [3] "Ratified by my blood" changes the scene from one of living companionship to one of atoning sacrifice, as of the "slain Lamb" of the Apocalypse.[4] In short, a symbol is becoming a sacrament.

The change is reaffirmed in Paul's further comments and criticisms. One who does not partake with "a proper sense of the Body" is to be visited by Divine displeasure. "That is why many of you are ill and infirm, and

[1] I Cor. xi. 23.
[2] I Cor. xi. 23 ff.
[3] I Cor. v. 7.
[4] Rev. v. 12 *et al.*

a number even dead." [1] To come to the "table of the Lord" is to escape from "the table of dæmons." [2] Still further, both baptism and the supper have been, it is affirmed, prefigured in the history of Israel. "All were baptized into Moses by the cloud and by the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink." [3] Here, then, as in baptism, is an invasion of new ideas among the tranquil associations of companionship with Jesus. A magical effect is to be procured for bodily health, a deliverance is promised from spiritual enemies, a reproduction of the history of Israel is portrayed. The ritual of the mystery-religions is summoned to reënforce by its analogies and forms the apostle's expanding thought; the myths of Mithra and Attis, prescribing a sacred meal through which the Divinity was revealed, soon seemed so nearly identical with Christian worship that Justin Martyr was led to describe the supper of Mithra-worship as a devilish imitation of the Christian rite.[4]

Yet though these alien ideas are appropriated by Paul they do not obscure his fundamental desire. These fragments of alien traditions which seemed to him to fortify his teaching are, in fact, mere interludes and amplifications. After all, he is at

[1] I Cor. xi. 29, 30. [2] I Cor. x. 21. [3] I Cor. x. 2–4.

[4] Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 66 (tr. Ante-Nicene Fathers, 1885, Vol. I, p. 185: "Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn."

heart, not a speculative philosopher, but a practical counsellor. Paul "is consciously digging in a field of thought that is not his own;" he "is working less with his own categories than with those of his readers." [1] The dominating aim of his long and detailed account of the Last Supper is not theological but ethical. It was the abuse of the Lord's Table which prompted him to write, "In your church-meetings I am told that cliques prevail. And I partly believe it." [2] It was the spiritual significance of their common meal which he exhorted them to remember. Indeed, the same motive might be applied to the entire conduct of life. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, let it be all done for the glory of God." [3] Thus his versatile and receptive mind is drawn toward opposite alternatives. At one moment, he seems a sacramentalist, yet at another he reaffirms the simplicity of Christian symbolism; at one point he seems to approach the Mithraism which may have been familiar to him in Tarsus; then, as if recovering himself, he claims what he calls "a single devotion to Christ." [4] "The sacramental conception, it must be in general concluded, contradicts the main tendency of Paul's theology, and reveals a mingling of foreign and inconsistent elements with the lofty piety of the gospel of Paul." [5]

Here again, however, as in the case of baptism,

[1] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
[2] I Cor. xi. 18.
[3] I Cor. x. 31.
[4] II Cor. xi. 3.
[5] Heitmüller, *op. cit.*, s. 75.

the Christian Church has been tempted to prize and perpetuate the very elements in Paul's teaching which are in their origin extra-Christian, and to convert the beautiful symbolism of the Lord's Supper into a sacrament which is more reminiscent of Mithra than of Jesus. It remains for the modern world to detach from this appealing and suggestive commemoration its alien elements, and to restore the fundamental intention of the apostle, as a skilful workman restores the long-concealed features of an ancient work of art. One after another layer of color has been superimposed, as if to increase or preserve the beauty of the original, but, in fact, disguising or defacing that beauty; while beneath these accretions lies, waiting for the modern mind to recover it, the original outlines of the master's work.

What, then, one may finally ask, are to be the consequences of this type of religious life, which thus expresses itself in words of prayer and acts of symbolism? They must be in part spiritual and personal, and in part external and social. From such an experience there must issue, first, a sustaining state of mind, and then a fellowship of kindred souls. The first consequence is what Paul describes as the gifts of the Spirit; the second is what he variously describes as the "Body of Christ," the "fellowship of the spirit," or "the church of God."

The personal consequences of faith are enumerated in various summaries with lofty confidence.

The "harvest of the Spirit," as he writes in one letter, is "joy, peace, good temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control;" [1] and again, "May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, that you may be overflowing with hope by the power of the holy Spirit!" [2] A glad exhilaration, a conscious happiness, is thus attained for the steadying of conduct and the control of emotion. It is a most curious fact that the word Fear hardly appears in the vocabulary of Paul, save when he quotes from ancient Scripture,[3] or where the word is equivalent either to self-distrust [4] or to respect.[5] On the other hand, the word Joy occurs repeatedly, like a *motif* which indicates the dominant thought. "We coöperate for your joy," [6] he writes; that "my joy would be a joy for every one of you;" [7] and, even at the close of his wanderings, with prison and chains immediately before him, he is reported as making the solemn affirmation, "I set no value on my own life as compared with the joy of finishing my course and fulfilling the commission I received." [8]

It was a habit of mind so remote from much which passes for religion that it might seem inappropriate or even vulgar. Instead of joy in work and worship, instead of an attitude toward life which delights, as Isaac Watts wrote,

[1] Gal. v. 22, 23.
[2] Rom. xv. 13.
[3] Rom. iii. 18 A. V.; Ps. xxxvi. 1.
[4] I Cor. ii. 3.
[5] Rom. xiii. 7.
[6] II Cor. i. 24.
[7] II Cor. ii. 3.
[8] Acts xx. 24.

"To run the heavenly race
And put a cheerful courage on,"

religion has been widely accepted as a submissive and chastening experience, promoted rather by timidity than by courage; and Paul's brave summons is as timely as ever to a reign of God which means integrity, cheerfulness, and serenity, or, in his words, "righteousness, joy, and peace in the holy Spirit." [1] Instead of being, as he has been often described, the preacher of a religion of fear, warning trembling souls from the wrath of God, Paul is the most convincing witness in Christian history of the unperturbed confidence and unclouded joy which are the natural consequence of a profound religious faith. Through all the vicissitudes of his troubled experience he maintains the gift for enjoying life, and reminds the modern reader of that gift for sympathy which his Lord manifested, and which has led one modern student to describe Jesus as the "Joyous Comrade." [2] No prayer for his fellow-Christians is more characteristic of Paul than the petition, "May the God of

[1] Rom. xiv. 17.

[2] Zangwill, "Dreamers of the Ghetto," 1899, p. 491: "Christ, not the tortured God, but the joyous comrade, the friend of all simple souls; the joyous comrade, with the children clinging to him, and peasants and fishers listening to his chat. . . . I have worked at this human picture of him—the joyous comrade—to restore the true Christ to the world." See also A. Wünsche, "Der lebensfreudige Jesus," 1876, s. 24: "We propose to show that Jesus was in reality a cheerful and happy personality, rejoicing in victory."

your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in your faith." [1]

Very far from continuous or consistent this healthy-minded serenity might be. There were reversions of mood and conflicts of spirit. so that Paul cries, "Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" [2] Between his shifting moods and the habitual serenity of his Master the contrast is most impressive. Jesus moves above these waves of rising and falling faith as though he walked on them; Paul struggles through them and arrives, panting, at the shore. Yet the ideal which Paul at times discerns, as though he were lifted on a crest of the sea and caught a glimpse of the land within his reach, is none other than that which Jesus steadily maintained. The peace of mind which Paul longs to reach is no absorption in the Infinite, such as the mystery-religions promised, but the tranquillizing effect of duty done. Generosity, fidelity, good-temper, self-control,—or what the Hebrew tradition had summarized as righteousness,—were to Paul the essence of faith and the harvest of the spirit. Here is no tremulous or apprehensive inquirer, but a resilient and triumphant believer. "Rejoice," he cries, "I will say it again, 'rejoice.'" [3]

Here is the underlying and substantial Paul. Ecstasies, enthusiasm, the "pneumatic gifts," were constantly soliciting his ardent mind; but as he reflects on the real nature of the life in

[1] Rom. xv. 13. [2] Rom. vii. 24. [3] Phil. iv. 4.

Christ, his sane and practical reason reasserts itself, and the same teacher who in a moment of enthusiasm tells his friends that "they are selected by grace, and therefore not for anything they have done," [1] is not less explicit in prescribing a moral test of such selection: "The spirit is living as the result of righteousness." [2] The religion of Paul thus becomes not so much a justification of mystic ecstasies as their corrective. The gift of vision is balanced in Paul by the grasp of facts. His eyes are on the stars, but his feet are on the ground. He mounts to lofty speculations on the method of redemption, when at last the risen Christ "hands over his royal power to God the Father"; [3] but then, as though these sublime anticipations might make one indifferent to the common duties of life, he abruptly descends to the plain talk of a sensible friend: "Get back to your sober senses and avoid sin." [4] In a word, with all its variations of mood and language, the religion of Paul is fundamentally what the modern world so insistently demands, a religion of sanctified sanity and illuminated common sense.

There remain to be observed the external and social consequences of Paul's religious life. An experience so profound and revolutionary could not remain isolated or self-sufficient. The consummation of Paul's faith in joy and peace pledged him to communicate those gifts and to make them common possessions. All along the Mediterranean

[1] Rom. xi. 6.
[2] Rom. viii. 10.
[3] I Cor. xv. 24.
[4] I Cor. xv. 34.

coast communities of disciples were fortified by his influence and accepted his authority. He becomes not only the philosopher and moralist, but the organizer of these infant churches. He sets forth with Silas, through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches; [1] he lays down a rule "for all the churches"; [2] he writes "to the church of God at Corinth." [3] "The pressing business each day" is "the care of all the churches." [4]

Yet in these reiterated counsels there is singularly little indication of any formal plan of government. A church, or ecclesia, was to him a group of people whom the Spirit had gathered out of the world, and who were pledged to Christian loyalty.[5] It might be those who met with Aquila and Prisca "in their house," [6] or with Philemon and "the church that meets in your house," [7] or the "consecrated and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossæ." [8] In any case, it was the

[1] Acts xv. 41.

[2] I Cor. vii. 17.

[3] I Cor. i. 2.

[4] II Cor. xi. 28.

[5] *Cf.* A. Sabatier, "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," tr. 1904; appendix, p. 384: "The word ἐκκλησία, church, is found twice only upon the lips of Jesus, and in only one Gospel (Matt. 16 [18]; 18 [17]). In the second case, the word church signifies simply the assembling of the brethren, the Christian synagogue. The former text is wanting in the parallel passages of Mark and Luke, and this omission is incomprehensible if these evangelists had found it in the first *logia* of Matthew," etc.

[6] I Cor. xvi. 19.

[7] Philemon 2.

[8] Col. i. 2.

inner bond, the spiritual unity, which had detached this obscure group of families and friends from the environing world. Indeed, there could be no serious desire for permanence of organization while Paul and his hearers were anticipating a return of their Lord, and when, as he writes, "the Day breaks in fire, and the fire will test the work of each, no matter what that work may be." [1] "We are," he writes to the Philippians, "a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven." [2]

It is a striking fact, therefore, that though the organization of the Christian church began with Paul, no form of organization was prescribed by him. It was merely the abuse of liberty, and the uncontrolled enthusiasm of the saints, which led him to prescribe orderliness and superintendence. "Let everything," he urges, "be for edification. As for speaking in a 'tongue,' let only two or at most three speak at one meeting, and that in turn." [3] Thus he builded, not perhaps better, but certainly otherwise, than he knew, and by one of the perversions of history has come to be regarded as the sponsor of an organization from which his passion for liberty would have probably rebelled. As he became the founder of Christian theology though not himself a theologian, so he became the founder of the Christian Ecclesia though not himself an ecclesiastic. For him there was but one test of a pure church. It was its possession, not of clerical orders or uniform rites, but of personal loyalty to the spirit of Christ. Where that spirit

[1] I Cor. iii. 13. [2] Phil. iii. 20. [3] I Cor. xiv. 26, 27.

prevailed and inspired a community, there was a church. A village prayer-meeting in the modern world, where piety is genuine and fervent, may be more Pauline in type as a church than a hierarchy of priests or a convocation of clergy. The accredited officials of a church were to him, not Divinely appointed instruments of grace, but delegated guardians of liberty.[1] Only once, and in one of his latest letters, does Paul definitely mention official direction, and here he greets primarily "all the saints," and adds, as if by an after-thought, "as well as the bishops and deacons." [2] These brethren, it would appear, were administrative agents rather than superior officers, caretakers of the community rather than Princes of the Church.

And what are to be the evidences that this life of the spirit has been, in any community, attained? They are to be found in the possession of certain "spiritual gifts" [3] which testify, in varied ways and degrees, to an effective religion. Paul enumerates these marks of a working faith, and his list is in the highest degree instructive, both for that which it includes and for the order in which these gifts are named. He does not scorn the evidence offered by the ecstatic utterances which religious emotion prompted, and which at their first appear-

[1] *Cf.* Weinel, "Paulus," 2te Aufl. 1915, s. 165: "Such is the Church, and towards its organization Paul takes the first step, little as he meant to take it. He took it by necessity, and often against his best and deepest desires." *Cf.* also, the first edition, Engl. Trans., pp. 209 ff.

[2] Phil. i. 1.

[3] I Cor. xii. 1.

ance suggested drunkenness or insanity.[1] Nor does he deny the gifts which prophets or healers may possess, in interpreting truth or curing bodies. He also, he says, has received "visions and revelations"; [2] he also can "speak in 'tongues.'" [3] Yet this tolerance, which sometimes seems to approach laxity, is restrained by a controlling sense of proportion, which sets above all gifts of wonder-working enthusiasm the higher evidence offered by what he calls Wisdom. The most characteristic mark of the Christian religion, in other words, is to be its sanity, its discernment, its discriminating and interpretative power. Wisdom, to Paul, is not identical with that which the Greeks meant by the word. Paul's wisdom is not learning. "Knowledge," he says, "puffs up"; [4] wisdom is not scholarship but insight. "It is my prayer that your love may be more and more rich in knowledge and all manner of insight, enabling you to have a sense of what is vital." [5] In short, while Paul is tolerant of the emotional extravagances which flooded in on the Christian life, his teaching, as has been wisely said, "lifts itself out of paganism by its sobriety," [6] and his final desire for those who are in the spirit is that God may "fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and insight." [7]

Such is the exalted conception of a Christian Church which issues from the religion of Paul. In

[1] Acts ii. 13; I Cor. xiv. 23.
[2] II Cor. xii. 1.
[3] I Cor. xiv. 18.
[4] I Cor. viii. 1.
[5] Phil. i. 9.
[6] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
[7] Col. i. 9.

the literal sense of the word, he is a High Churchman; for a church is to him not a group of functionaries, prescribing regulations and exercising authority, or an association for the promoting of dogmatic consent, but a spiritual democracy which has been lifted to a high plane of habitual conduct, where membership is gained by spiritual intimacy with Christ, and where the best gift is that of wisdom. This lofty ideal of a true church is boldly affirmed by Paul in his striking figure of the body of Christ, with its joints and sinews,[1] and it is a singular perversion of his thought which has applied this figure to the Church as a form of government or a corporate unity. The apostolic conception is not only more elevated, but more true to the figure of speech employed. A body is dead without an indwelling spirit. A body is the bearer and witness of a soul. Health for the body is not secured by physical form but by interior vitality. So it is, Paul teaches, with the body of Christ. It is the organ of the spirit. It is not one body unless its members, though many, are one body in Christ,[2] each member fulfilling its part because the Spirit rules them all. Christian unity, that is to say, is to be attained, not by prescription of conformity, but by increase of consecration. A church is not an administrative, but a spiritual, creation. As the body is the organ of the mind, so the Church is the organ of the spirit. Its health and growth depend, not on its definition of the nature of Christ, but on its fellowship with the spirit of Christ. "Any-

[1] Col. ii. 19. [2] I Cor. xii. 27.

one who does not possess the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him." [1] Many a modern effort to establish Christian unity through consent to creeds or assent to authority is confronted by stern rebuke when it encounters this lofty ideal of the Body of Christ, which is the consummation of Paul's religion. What is it, indeed, but the reiteration of that sublime prayer which the Fourth Gospel reports as the last desire of Paul's Master for his followers,—"that they may be made perfectly one;" [2] not primarily in their opinions or their practices, but in that spiritual affinity which, in a poor human way, may reflect the kinship of Jesus with the Father to whom he prays, "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, so may they be in us, . . . that they may be one as we are one." [3]

[1] Rom. viii. 9. [2] John xvii. 23. [3] John xvii. 21, 22.

CHAPTER VI

THE ETHICS OF PAUL AND THE MODERN WORLD

When one turns from the complexity of Paul's theology and the mysticism of his religion and approaches his ethical teaching, it is as if one were emerging from a tangled and bewildering forest into a sunny clearing on a well-marked road. The instructions and exhortations with which Paul concludes each of his letters are so spontaneous, specific and practical, that they seem to proceed from quite another Paul than the philosophical and visionary teacher; or rather to exhibit the real Paul, extricating himself from his entangled speculations, and rejoicing in plain language and obvious truths.

At the close of his earliest letter, for example, after announcing a series of lofty and dubious speculations concerning the descending Lord, the trumpet of God, and the souls "caught up to meet the Lord in the air," he suddenly descends to homely and prosaic maxims: "Be at peace among yourselves;" "Keep a check upon loafers;" "Never lose your temper;" "Aim at what is kind to one another and to all the world." [1] Warnings and exhortations succeed each other in a stream of headlong precipitancy; and when, later, he enumer-

[1] I Thess. v. 13 ff.

ates the virtues which he commends, he gives the same impression of a release from restraint, as though what had preceded had caused him intellectual effort, and at last he was unembarrassed and free. 'Love, joy, peace," he says, "good temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control:—there is no law against those who practice such things." [1] "Be clothed with compassion, kindliness, humility, gentleness, and good temper." [2] "Keep in mind whatever is true, whatever is worthy, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is attractive, whatever is high-toned, all excellence, all merit." [3] "Let your love be a real thing; . . . associate with humble folk; never be self-conceited; . . . do not let evil get the better of you; get the better of evil by doing good." [4] How perennially applicable, how convincing in their terseness and even in their humor, such admonitions and persuasions are! What a sense of relief is felt by many a plain reader as he passes from the jungle of Paul's argumentation, and finds himself in the open country of this healthy-minded morality! Here at least it would seem is teaching to which the modern world may still listen, as to timely truth.[5]

[1] Gal. v. 22–23.
[2] Col. iii. 12.
[3] Phil. iv. 8.
[4] Rom. xii. 9 ff.

[5] It is interesting to recall that the earliest existing comment on the teaching of Paul, that of Clement of Rome, who, according to Irenæus, had "seen and conversed with the blessed apostles," singles out as the distinguishing mark of Paul's mission his ethical teaching: "After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in

It soon appears, however, that nowhere in Paul's writings does one encounter more obvious marks of the varied influences which environ him, and that nowhere is there more need of discrimination in estimating his words. Mystery-cults, Hebrew traditions, and Roman indifference beset him on every side. He is defending a new cause against a hostile world. Those who "knew God" have "turned to futile speculations till their ignorant minds grew dark." [1] It is for him to maintain a "good" or "clear" conscience,[2] and to rescue his hearers from the moral degradation of their own time. That, he says, is to be "your cult, a spiritual rite." [3] Here, then, as in the case of his theology and of his religion, it must be recognized that much of the teaching is of temporary or local or racial significance alone. Instructions concerning "food that has been offered to idols," [4] rebukes of "men who are keen upon you getting circumcised," [5] political adjustments under the authority of Rome,[6] suggestions that "while long hair is disgraceful for a man, for a woman long hair is a glory," [7] are obviously inapplicable or meaningless to another age and civilization. The more specific and intimate such exhortations and warnings become

the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world." Lightfoot, "St. Clement of Rome, An Appendix, Epistle to the Corinthians," 1877, p. 348.

[1] Rom. i. 21.
[2] Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16.
[3] Rom. xii. 1.
[4] I Cor. viii. 1.
[5] Gal. vi. 12.
[6] Rom. xiii. 1 ff.
[7] I Cor. xi. 14–15.

among the troubled conditions of Paul's own time, the more they are likely to be regarded as local, provincial, or even unintelligible.

It must still further be remembered that the area of Paul's practical ethics was bounded by another presupposition. Before his mind, as before the minds of his people, hung always the shadow of an impending world-catastrophe, which would soon make an end of existing institutions and bring in a new order of the world. With this dread anticipation before him, there could be but slight concern for revolutions in government or change in "government-authorities." [1] Even the condition of slavery, or any other external circumstance, must be inherently transient and incidental. All he needs to say under such conditions is that: "A slave who is called to be in the Lord is a freedman of the Lord. Just as a free man who is called is a slave of Christ." [2] His counsels are given under circumstances which he describes as "the imminent distress in these days," and his advice is that "you remain just as you are," "for the present phase of things is passing away." [3]

One must therefore approach the ethics of Paul, not as though it were a system of moral philosophy valid for all times, but as the adaptation of his ideals to the definite conditions of civilization in the Roman world. Great words of ethics, it is true,—Flesh, Spirit, Mind, Conscience, the carnal and the spiritual man,—recur like *motifs* in his letters, and recall the system-makers of Greece

[1] Rom. xiii. 1. [2] I Cor. vii. 22; Col. iii. 11. [3] I Cor. vii. 26, 31.

and Rome. Analogies with Plato, coincidences with Seneca, parallels with Philo, have been confidently traced, and it is manifestly improbable that a student, born as was Paul where the philosophy of Stoicism was dominant, could leave that lofty doctrine wholly unappropriated.[1]

Yet these researches concerning the place of Paul in the history of moral philosophy may disguise rather than clarify his controlling aim. For the obvious fact is that he is not concerned with expounding a philosophy of conduct, but is simply considering those specific problems of duty which

[1] *Cf.* Alexander, "The Ethics of St. Paul," 1910, pp. 36, 42, 46. Jowett, *op. cit.*, I. 363, "St. Paul and Philo." J. Weiss, "Die Bedeutung des Paulus für den modernen Christen", in "Zeitschrift für die N. T. Wiss.," 1919–20, s. 142: "It is the Stoic note in his ethics, the emphasis on freedom (I Cor. 6 ^{12}) and on the kingly mastery of the world (I Cor. 3 ^{21} ff.), the Greek accent in certain demands, as for instance for 'honor' (I Thess. 4 ^{4}) and for 'decorum' (I Cor. 7 ^{35}) which can add iron to a time suffering as ours is from moral anæmia." So also W. W. Fowler, "The Religious Experience of the Roman People," 1911, pp. 381, 454, 455: "Stoicism, as we shall see, held out a hand to the new movement. . . . But the thought that our senses and our reason are not after all the sole fountains of our knowledge, a thought which is the essence of mysticism, was really foreign to Stoicism. . . . These imaginative yearnings were not native to the Roman. . . . But the mere fact that they were in the air at Rome is of importance. . . . They prepared the Roman mind for Christian eschatology. . . . St. Paul exactly expresses the yearning thus dimly foreshadowed in the mystical movement (II Cor. v. 4)."

So Gummere, "Seneca the Philosopher," 1922, pp. 54, 69: "Stoicism was the porch to Christianity. . . . No doubt St. Paul was in Rome during Seneca's lifetime, and it is not inconceivable that they may have met and exchanged ideas."

meet one who is already committed to the cause of Christ. Not ethics in general, but Christian ethics, is his theme. The profound experience of his conversion has made him a "new man," and he now inquires what a man thus made new should be and do. His ethics is in reality applied religion. It assumes that he is writing to those who have "taken on the character of Christ." [1] Scholastic learning, in so far as it is familiar to him, excites his contempt rather than his admiration. Knowledge, he says, "will be superseded." [2] Christian duty is conduct done in the sight of God. "Lead a life worthy of the God who called you." "Do you not know you are God's temple?" "Glorify God with your body." [3] Such are the characteristic admonitions in which morality becomes a corollary of faith, and religion is expressed in ethics. Christian behavior is the consequence of Christian conviction. The categorical imperative of duty is supplanted by the sense of God's persuasion. "Man is no longer governed by 'Thou shalt' but by 'I will.'" [4]

No sooner has one recognized this limitation in Paul's ethics than there is disclosed the real nature of the moral authority claimed by him. If one turns to Paul for direction concerning modern politics, or the regulation of marriage, or the

[1] Gal. iii. 27.

[2] I Cor. xiii. 8; *cf.* viii. 1.

[3] I Thess. ii. 12; I Cor. iii. 16; I Cor. vi. 20.

[4] Weinel, "St. Paul," tr. 1906, p.135. The phrase is not used in the second edition.

rules of propriety for women, he immediately finds himself involved in counsels which are impracticable, archaic, or even, to the modern mind, absurd. Civic duty could mean to Paul little more than endurance of the Roman yoke;[1] marriage is tolerated by him as an institution to be soon supplanted by that higher state where, as Jesus had said, "people neither marry nor are married, they are like the angels of God in heaven";[2] sexual impurity is condemned by Paul, not primarily for its harm to another or to society, but for the self-degradation it works in a "member of Christ." "The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord. . . . Your bodies are members of Christ. Am I to take Christ's members and devote them to a harlot?"[3] Restriction on praying "in tongues,"[4] or prohibition of public prayer by "an unveiled woman,"[5] may have been important in ancient Corinth, but are of merely archæological interest to-day. Yet within this environment of tradition and custom, there are revealed in Paul's teaching certain principles of conduct whose validity has no such limit of time or place; and through his "interim ethics" emerge ideals as indestructible as was that visionary hope of a reign of God which inspired Jesus himself. What one sees in Paul's letters is a great

[1] II Thess. ii. 7. Phil. iii. 20.
[2] Matt. xxii. 30; Mark xii. 25; Luke xx. 35 f.
[3] I Cor. vi. 13, 15.
[4] I Cor. xiv. 14.
[5] I Cor. xi. 13.

man, wrestling like Laocoon with the constricting conditions of his own age, and at last flinging them to his feet, and standing erect and free. It was, in a word, the same moral strength which fortifies a Christian in any age. What, one must still ask himself, is to happen when a life has committed itself to Christ? What entanglements, either of the world or of the church, are escaped when "the law of the spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus"? [1] What are the permanent principles of Christian ethics? How is a Christian to meet the issues and demands of his own time? These are the limited yet searching questions with which the modern world may turn with undiminished teachableness to the authority of the Apostle Paul.

The first answer which Paul makes to these questions concerning Christian ethics is in his reiterated and passionately cherished ideal of moral liberty.[2] The first consequence of Christian conviction is that one is free,—free from external prescriptions, such as the Jewish law illustrated to Paul; free from all bondage of the letter, such as modern life with its environing compulsions so painfully feels; free, still more, from the tyranny of sin in one's own heart. Greek ethics gave little place to confessions of repentance. Sin was a blunder, not a blot; missing the mark rather than missing the way.[3] Many a perplexed and incon-

[1] Rom. viii. 2. [2] *Cf.* Morgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 180 ff.

[3] *Cf.* T. R. Glover, "Jesus in the Experience of Men," 1921, p. 82, citing Rashdall, "Conscience and Christ," p. 129: "There

stant soul through all the generations since has found its own experience anticipated in Paul's sense of a divided life, and has taken to itself the penitent confession, "I want to do what is right, but wrong is all I can manage; I cordially agree with God's law . . . but then I find quite another law in my members." [1] Paul gave new vitality to this sense of culpability and this cry for release. The law of sin was a law of death,[2] from which only the spirit of life in Christ could set one free.

The sense of repentance and shame becomes so poignant with Paul that, as so often happens in his thought, he expands his personal experience into the dimensions of a general law, interpreting all human history. "From Adam to Moses," he says, "death reigned." "Adam prefigured Him who was to come." [3] It is not surprising that this sweeping generalization has made a profound appeal to multitudes of self-convicted and self-reproaching souls, and that even so noble a nature as that of John Wesley should have found in the "fall of man" the very corner-stone of the Christian religion.[4] With Paul, however, the dominant

is nothing about repentance in Aristotle, not very much in Plato; more no doubt in the teaching of the Stoics, though the proud self-sufficiency of that school hardly favored a penitential attitude of mind."

[1] Rom. vii. 21–23.

[2] Rom. viii. 2.

[3] Rom. v. 14, 15.

[4] "The Works of John Wesley," Amer. ed. 1827, II. 43: "Let me entreat every serious person once more to fix his attention

effect of this conviction of sin was not a sense of helplessness, but, on the contrary, a sense of emancipation. A great wave of exhilaration floods over the apostle's mind as he realizes that moral authority for him comes no longer from without, but from within. "Am I not free?" he cries, "Am I not an apostle?" [1] "Brothers, you were called to be free." [2] "Make a firm stand, then, do not slip into any yoke of servitude." [3] It was a liberty which emancipated one from ceremonials, rituals, social conventions or ascetic rites. "Why should one's own freedom be called in question by someone else's conscience?" [4] "Who are you to criticize the servant of Another? It is for his Master to say whether he stands or falls." [5] "St. Paul is like a burnt child, shy even of the hearth-fire of his race, and afraid of a return to bondage." [6] The autonomy of conscience, the right to stand alone, the assurance that one with God is a majority,—these principles of moral authority are to Paul the precious possessions of one who

here. . . . The fall of Adam produced the death of Christ. . . . If God had prevented the fall of man, 'the Word' had never 'been made flesh.'" So, also, in the "Doctrine of Original Sin," 1757, p. 414: "If we were not ruined by the first Adam, neither are we recovered by the second."

[1] I Cor. ix. 1.

[2] Gal. v. 13.

[3] Gal. v. 1.

[4] I Cor. x. 29.

[5] Rom. xiv. 4.

[6] *Cf.* Hutchinson, "Christian Freedom," 1920, p. 51, with a careful note on Galatians v. 1, p. 83 f.

has committed himself to Christian loyalty. "The spiritual man, again, can read the meaning of everything, and yet no one can read what he is." [1] It is a striking fact that, while the word Conscience does not occur in the first three Gospels, it is repeatedly on the lips of Paul, and its reiterated use has encouraged the impression that he may have had at least a casual acquaintance with the Stoic philosophers of his time. "Brothers," he is reported as saying to the Sanhedrin, "I have lived with a perfectly good conscience before God down to the present day." [2] "My proud boast," he writes, "is the testimony of my conscience." [3] The *mens conscia recti* becomes the organ of his freedom, and the justification of his authority.[4]

This supreme confidence in the voice of conscience has through all the Christian centuries commended Paul to those who were inclined to the philosophy of ethical individualism. They have welcomed Paul's defiant teaching: "It matters very little to me that you or any human court should cross-question me on this point." [5] "Each

[1] I Cor. ii. 15.

[2] Acts xxiii. 1.

[3] II Cor. i. 12; *cf.* I Cor. viii. 10 ff.

[4] *Cf.* Toy, "Judaism and Christianity," 1890, p. 278, note: "Christian liberty is deliverance from the dogma that salvation is wrought out by obedience,—that is, from external ecclesiasticism, salvation is not in the Church, but in Christ. The obligation to keep the moral law remains; the obligation of the ceremonial law falls away of itself."

[5] I Cor. iv. 3.

of us then will have to answer for himself to God." [1] Yet it is evident that liberty, thus unqualifiedly claimed, may become license, and that moral individualism may easily mean social anarchism. Paul's saying, "Our thoughts are Christ's thoughts," [2] may be perverted to mean that Christ's thoughts must be tested by our thoughts; and Christian freedom may become irresponsible, arrogant or divisive. One of the finest evidences, therefore, of Paul's intellectual sanity is to be found in the fact that, having claimed for himself perfect liberty, he is yet able to restrain that liberty, or even to relinquish it. "You were called to be free;" he writes, "only, do not make your freedom an opening for the flesh, but serve one another in love." [3] Still more explicitly, he pledges restraint for himself: "If food is any hindrance to my brother's welfare, sooner than injure him I will never eat flesh as long as I live, never!" [4] To be consciously master of one's decisions, "with the freedom for which Christ set us free," [5] and then to curb that freedom for the sake of others,—this, in any period of history, is the higher conscience, which justifies liberty through restraint, and makes considerateness the crown of consecration. It is the principle announced in that saying which is perhaps the supreme moral maxim reported of Jesus himself: "For their sake I consecrate myself." [6] Consecration is not for its own

[1] Rom. xiv. 12.
[2] I Cor. ii. 16.
[3] Gal. v. 13.
[4] I Cor. viii. 13.
[5] Gal. v. 1.
[6] John xvii. 19.

sake; it is an instrument of service. Individualism is fulfilled in altruism. Service is perfect freedom. The right to stand alone is justified through its surrender. "Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave," [1] said Jesus; and Paul, in perfect accord with his Master, writes, "Free as I am from all, I have made myself the slave of all." [2]

From this primary principle of liberty there follows the second determining element of Christian morals. It is the sense of power. Here, among the moral problems of any age, is the test of conscience: Is it a working dynamic? Does it act as well as discriminate? Is it, as a later Epistle says, a "good conscience," [3]—good, that is to say, for something; a source of energy, an efficient force? Attention has already been called to Paul's reiterated use of the word Power. It leaps into his mind when he seeks a word to describe his message or to fortify his hope. The Gospel is "God's saving power;" [4] "God's Reign does not show itself in talk but in power;" [5] "I have met you . . . by the power of our Lord Jesus;" [6] "I am proud . . . to have the power of Christ

[1] Matt. xx. 27.

[2] I Cor. ix. 19. *Cf.* Hugh Black, "Culture and Restraint," 1901, p. 338: "The qualifications for the best usefulness are detachment and sympathy; an aloofness of spirit, if not of life, along with sensitiveness to the needs and sorrows and sins of men."

[3] I Tim. i. 5.

[4] Rom. i. 16.

[5] I Cor. iv. 20.

[6] I Cor. v. 4.

resting on my life;" [1]—such is the consciousness of capacity, with its endowment of courage, which Paul's religion transmits to his moral life. Instead of passive renunciation of the world there is active domination of the world. Instead of resignation there is resolution. Instead of ascetic restraint there is athletic discipline. Life in Christ means mastery. Surrender becomes victory. "I am strong," Paul says, "just when I am weak." [2]

At this point the convergence of Paul's teaching with that of his Master becomes once more unmistakable. While, as has already been noted, Christian art and sentiment have for many centuries pictured the figure of Jesus as that of a submissive sufferer, an anæmic saint, the dominating impression actually made by Jesus on his companions was evidently that of power. It is true that his tragic fate could not but recall the ancient prophecy of the Messiah of Israel, as a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." [3] Yet beneath the vicissitudes of his career, there was a manifest control, both of circumstances and of himself, which impressed all beholders with the sense of power. Mastery, leadership, authority,—such were the traits that drew people to Jesus by the attractive force of a larger life. From this source Paul derived the power which marked his own career. He assures his friends that "It is no weak Christ you have to do with, but a Christ of power." [4] Paul's life in the spirit had made

[1] II Cor. xii. 9.
[2] II Cor. xii. 10.
[3] Is. liii. 3.
[4] II Cor. xiii. 3.

him not only free but strong. It was worth a man's having; it gave him a right to lead.[1]

At this point also, where Paul's character partakes of the power of Christ, it becomes peculiarly intelligible and persuasive to the mind of the modern world. A resigned and submissive Christ, or a Paul who says, "I know how to live humbly," [2] "We are treated as the scum of the earth," [3] may offer consolation to afflicted and disheartened lives in every age; but the supreme need of the present time is for moral power, for justified leadership, for the conquest of circumstances by character, for the mastery of a perplexed and leaderless world; and of this capacity to apply moral freedom to efficient service the most reassuring example is to be found in the untiring and masterful energy of the Apostle Paul.

To this endowment of liberty and the resultant power, must be added one further factor in Paul's moral life. It is the consciousness of growth. The abrupt transition made by his conversion, and his unhesitating confidence in the dictates of his new faith, have encouraged some readers to conclude that his teaching was in effect that of moral perfectionism. "There is," he says," a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ; what is old is gone, the new has come;" [4] and again,

[1] *Cf.* the more detailed treatment in Peabody, "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," 1905, p. 152.

[2] Phil. iv. 12.

[3] I Cor. iv. 13.

[4] II Cor. v. 17.

"The law of the Spirit . . . has set me free from the law of sin and death." [1] So, again, he writes to the Romans: "Set free from sin, you have passed into the service of righteousness." [2] These assurances express Paul's ideal of Christian morals. A life completely "hidden with Christ in God" [3] will be safe from the invasion of sin. It has heard and obeyed the great command of Jesus, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." [4]

When, however, Paul turns from his moral ideal to his moral experience, his habitual confession is far from that of a perfectionist. It is, on the contrary, a confession of struggle, conflict and frequent defeat; of retarded, though determined, growth. Body and soul contend within him. "I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." [5] The Christian life is not for him achieved or perfected; it is still involved in warfare against "the spirit forces of evil." You must "take God's armour . . . and hold your ground." [6] There is a race to run, with a prize to win; there is a fight with one's baser self, in which "I maul and master my body, in case, after preaching to other people, I am disqualified myself." [7] In a most striking phrase, Paul's message is described as given "by faith and for faith," or, as the words

[1] Rom. viii. 2.
[2] Rom. vi. 18.
[3] Col. iii. 3.
[4] Matt. v. 48.
[5] Rom. vii. 25.
[6] Eph. vi. 12 f.
[7] I Cor. ix. 24, 27.

have been interpreted, "starting from a smaller quantity of faith to produce a larger quantity, at once intensively and extensively, in the individual and in society." [1] Faith, in other words, is the evidence of spiritual growth; it is a cumulative possession, a turning of the will to the true pole. Perfection remains remote and unattained. Moral progress, even at its best, is a "straining to what lies before me, to press on to the goal for the prize of God's high call in Christ Jesus." [2] For Paul the slough of despond lay beyond the wicket-gate of his conversion, and it was not until he "came up with the cross" that his "burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from his back, and began to tumble, and he saw it no more."

Here, again, as one contrasts this strenuous and combative morality with the prevailing temper of Paul's Master it is like passing from storm to sunshine. Instead of passion, turbulence and impulsiveness, there is serenity, self-possession, the "gentleness and considerateness" of Christ. The once-born soul seems to reproach the violence of the twice-born. Yet in their doctrines of moral growth the two teachings are not so dissimilar as might at first appear. With Paul, character is, it is true, the product of struggle and victory; while with Jesus it grows as nature grows, "the blade first, the ear of corn next, and then the

[1] Sanday and Headlam, "Inter. Crit. Comm." on Rom. i. 17.

[2] Phil. iii. 13–14. The teaching of Paul concerning sin is considered with discriminating detail by Stewart Means, "Saint Paul and the Ante-Nicene Church," 1903, pp. 27 ff.

grain full in the ear." Indeed, the growth is, as the parable so finely says, often unobserved and subconscious. The sower "sleeps at night and rises by day," and the grain he has planted "shoots up—he knows not how." [1] Yet the winning of a race and the growth of a seed have at least this in common, that both demand patience, expectancy, the persuasion of the unattained. "Love, joy, and peace," with Paul as with Jesus are not outright endowments of perfection, but a final "harvest of the Spirit," [2] for which one must wait, as one waits for the ripening grain. It is the impetuous apostle, not the serene Master, who teaches that we should "wait in the Spirit for the righteousness we hope for." [3] Even though Paul has written that "there is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ," [4] he yet, within a few lines, commits himself to the law of growth,—"I never lose heart; though my outward man decays, my inner man is renewed day after day." [5] The Christian life with Paul, as with Jesus, is a moral evolution; "the animate, not the spiritual, comes first, and only then the spiritual." [6] Liberty and power grow until character reaps its ripened harvest.

If, then, these are the gifts which Christian loyalty, even by slow degrees, may hope to receive, what are to be their effects in character and service? How shall a free, powerful, and growing conscience express itself in the conduct of life?

[1] Mark iv. 27–28.
[2] Gal. v. 22.
[3] Gal. v. 5.
[4] II Cor. v. 17.
[5] II Cor. iv. 16.
[6] I Cor. xv. 46.

What are the characteristic virtues of a Christian? The first impression made by Paul's repeated enumeration of these "fruits of the spirit" is of sheer diversity, and even of confusion. Passive and active virtues, self-defensive and self-forgetting conduct, conflict with the flesh and conquest over it, seem equally emphasized. Audacity and humility, self-control and self-sacrifice, are described as marks of "God's own chosen." [1] "Qualities so like and unlike are hard to reconcile; perhaps they have never been united in the same degree in any human being." [2]

Yet these apparently heterogeneous lists testify in a most striking manner to the many-sidedness of Paul's own character, and recall in particular the two strains of tradition which in a unique degree unite in him. On the one hand is his appreciation of the Greek virtues, the praise of manhood, self-mastery, and strength. Of wisdom, in the Greek sense, he professes a persistent contempt. 'Sage, scribe, critic of this world, where are they all? Has not God stultified the wisdom of this world? " [3] Yet from within this confidence in the guidance

[1] Col. iii. 12.

[2] Jowett, *op. cit.*, I. 297. This fusion of opposing traits is described with precision by G. F. Barbour, "A Philosophical Study of Christian Ethics," 1911, pp. 19 ff., *e. g.* Earnestness and Equanimity, Severity and Mercy, Confidence and Caution, with note on Newman on the Paradox of Christian Character, p. 394. *Cf.* also Watkinson, "Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul," 1913.

[3] I Cor. i. 20. So, Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 174 ff. So, Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 177: "Paul values and cultivates gnosis, but in the last resort his piety is not gnostic."

of the Spirit, there emerges a new kind of wisdom, a Christian Gnosis, an insight which is not of the world, but which is able to judge the world. It is the wisdom of spiritual-mindedness, a fulfilment of the promise made to the pure in heart, that they shall "see God"; the phenomenon which may be observed in modern as in ancient times, where moral purity, like an unclouded lens, permits a clearer view of truth than the sophisticated reason can attain. Obscured as Paul's teaching is by his controversy with contemporary philosophy and his use of alien terms, wisdom is to him that capacity to discern and discriminate, which, as Jesus said, is often hidden from "the wise and learned," and revealed to "the simple-minded." [1]

A similar adaptation of Greek ideals is found in Paul's attitude toward the virtue of self-control. What with Plato was a faculty of repression and restraint becomes with Paul a way of discipline and mastery. What with Aristotle was a prudent pursuit of the mean becomes with Paul a training for efficiency.[2] "I . . . master my body," he

[1] Matt. xi. 25=Luke x. 21.

[2] "Republic," tr. Jowett, 1871, Book iv. 430, 443. "Temperance is, as I conceive, a sort of order and control of certain pleasures and desires; this is implied in the saying of a man being his own master. . . . The just man does not permit the several elements within him to meddle with one another, or any of them to do the work of others, but he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master, and at peace with himself." So Gardner, "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," 1911, p. 140: "The life of virtue is not to him, as to Aristotle, a pursuit of the mean between extremes, but an enthusiasm, a passion."

says. "Every athlete practices self-restraint all round." [1] Passion, in other words, is not to be repressed, but to be disciplined, as a runner nerves himself for a race. When Felix, the Roman Governor, heard his Jewish prisoner speak of "self-mastery," [2] he may well have believed that the words were a fragment caught from some Stoic philosopher, and, with a new respect for his prisoner, he "grew uneasy" while Paul spoke.

Yet what seems an obvious affinity with the Greek tradition is at once supplemented in Paul by a wholly different quality, which stamps him as, not a Greek, but a Hebrew. It is the sacrificial spirit, the self-effacing temper, the capacity to dedicate self-control to the life of service. "To live a life worthy of your calling, with perfect modesty and gentleness," [3] "humbly considering each other the better man," [4] is counsel which must have seemed extravagant or misleading to the Greek mind, trained to rank as the noblest virtues self-respect or high-mindedness. To such a hearer, there may have been even a touch of vulgarity in the saying, "Free as I am from all, I have made myself the slave of all." [5] The praise of humility,[6] of forbearance,[7] of forgiveness,[8] of generosity,[9] touches a new moral chord. In such exhortations, Paul turns his back on Greek ideals and commits himself to the tradition of his own people, and to the teaching of his newly discovered

[1] I Cor. ix. 27, 25.
[2] Acts xxiv. 25.
[3] Eph. iv. 1–2.
[4] Phil. ii. 3.
[5] I Cor. ix. 19.
[6] Phil. ii. 3.
[7] Phil. iv. 5.
[8] II Cor. ii. 10.
[9] Col. iii. 13.

Lord, as though he were repeating the promise to Israel: "I dwell . . . with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," [1] or the still more unqualified saying of Jesus, "Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit! " [2]

Not all at once, or without effort, does Paul overcome this spiritual conflict between Greek and Hebrew morals, between self-assertion and self-surrender. He proudly claims the right to lead, and even to dictate: "I could rely on outward privilege, if I chose. Whoever thinks he can rely on that, I can outdo him." [3] "Let them vaunt as they please," he says of his opponents, "I am equal to them." [4] "My proud boast is the testimony of my conscience." [5] Yet at another moment the torturing memory of his own blunders and sins wrings from him a confession of insufficiency and a cry for help: "It was in weakness and fear and with great trembling that I visited you." [6] "I am the very least of the apostles, unfit to bear the name of apostle, since I persecuted the church of God." [7] "'Nobody' as I am, I am not one whit inferior." [8] "Who will rescue me from this body of death? " [9]

How shall this moral paradox, as old as philos-

[1] Is. lvii. 15. [4] II Cor. xi. 21. [7] I Cor. xv. 9.
[2] Matt. v. 3. [5] II Cor. i. 12. [8] I Cor. xii. 11.
[3] Phil. iii. 4. [6] I Cor. ii. 3.
[9] Rom. vii. 24. So, A. Juncker, "Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus," II. 1919, ss. 36, 37: "His letters abound in expressions of strong self-confidence. . . . Yet his pride is always bounded by the consciousness which a forgiven sinner cannot escape, that 'by God's grace I am what I am.' (I Cor. xv. 10.)"

ophy, as new as each conscience in the modern world, be solved? How may one be at once brave and humble, self-confident and self-effacing, "free from all, yet the slave of all"? The answer of Paul to this fundamental problem of ethics is unhesitating and undisguised. It is the enlistment in a cause that demands much more than one can give which at once justifies self-confidence and prescribes humility. It is the habit of mind in which a soldier is trained when he enlists for a war. He can command because he has learned to obey. His subordination has prepared him for leadership. He tells one man to go and he goes, and another to come and he comes, because he is himself "a man under authority." [1] In short, one does not find himself until he loses himself, and in loyal service discovers perfect freedom. This is what Paul, through much struggle against his imperious will, had found in surrender to the cause of Christ. What might have seemed submission was, in fact, emancipation. His was a "freedom for which Christ set us free." [2] It was, as the Epistle of James said, "the faultless law of freedom." [3] "The law of the Spirit," Paul confidently affirms, "brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death." [4]

Here, indeed, is the only way of escape from the perennial paradox of morality, and it leads the modern mind, as it did the Apostle Paul, straight

[1] Matt. viii. 9.
[2] Gal. v. 1.
[3] James i. 25.
[4] Rom. viii. 2.

back to the most searching of all the moral axioms announced by Jesus: "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." [1] Self-discovery through self-surrender, gain through loss, freedom through dependence,—such is the solution of the moral paradox which all four Gospels offer, as though it were very near the secret of the teaching of Jesus. Towards this moral ideal Greek and Hebrew traditions converge until, as Paul said, "There is no room for Greek and Jew. . . . Christ is everything and everywhere." [2]

And how shall this ethical idealism, in which freedom and dependence meet, utter itself in action? Its broad and open channel is through that self-forgetful service which Paul, in unmistakable affinity with the teaching of Jesus, describes as Love. As the Master, when asked, "What is the greatest commandment of the law?" cites the ancient Scripture of love to God and man,[3] so Paul, with the same allusion to the well known Scriptures of his people, writes: "The entire Law is summed up in one word, in, You must love your neighbor as yourself;" [4] and as Jesus in unadorned simplicity says, "Love your enemies;" [5] "Her sins . . . are forgiven, for

[1] Matt. x. 39; xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24; xvii. 33; John xii. 25.

[2] Col. iii. 11.

[3] Matt. xxii. 37–39; Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.

[4] Gal. v. 14.

[5] Matt. v. 44.

her love is great;" [1] so Paul, in the exuberance of his passionate loyalty, interrupts his technical instructions about ritual administration with a lyric of "The Higher Path," so perfect in form and so lofty in spirit that it must be ranked with the noblest utterances of Jesus himself.[2] The structure of character which Paul erects on the foundation of love is the most permanent monument of his insight, discrimination, and poise.[3] On this height of poetic insight, dependence and freedom, religion and ethics, meet. "We love," as was later written, "because He loved us first." [4] The love that is given must be first received. First, "God's love floods our hearts through the holy Spirit," [5] and then love, joy, and peace become the natural outflow of that abundant flood.

Finally, the character thus commended by Paul becomes in him not merely a tranquillizing ideal but a passionate motive, a flame which breaks out in affectionate solicitude for his fellow-Christians; passing, as the author of "Ecce Homo" said, from a "passive morality to an active morality," and changing humanity "from a restraint to a motive." [6] This "enthusiasm of humanity" adds a new note to Paul's ethics, and transforms it

[1] Luke vii. 47.

[2] Morgan *op. cit.*, p. 197: "The ethic of Paul is in all respects that of Jesus. . . . The fact stares us in the face. . . . The Apostle stood under the influence of the Master."

[3] I Cor. xiii.

[4] I John iv. 19.

[5] Rom. v. 5.

[6] "Ecce Homo," Edition 1867, p. 207.

from a moral guide into a spiritual summons. "My heart is wide open for you," he writes to the Corinthians; "Make a place for me in your hearts"; "I was specially delighted at the delight of Titus";[1] and to the Philippians, "So then, my brothers, for whom I cherish love and longing, my joy and crown, this is how you must stand firm in the Lord, O my beloved";[2] and yet again, to the Thessalonians, "Who is our hope, our joy, our crown of pride?. . . Why, you, you are our glory and joy!"[3] In these searching utterances affection assumes the tone of authority. Paul speaks not for himself but for his Master. "So I am an envoy for Christ, God appealing by me."[4] The limits of an ethical system give way before this rush of affectionate desire, and moral admonitions are submerged by a wave of sympathetic emotion.

> "Then with a rush the intolerable craving,
> Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
> Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
> Die for their life, be offered for them all."[5]

At this point the stream of Pauline ethics sweeps from the limited area of personal integrity into the broader field of social service. It is true that here, as elsewhere, the immediate intention of the apostle does not look beyond the Christian com-

[1] II Cor. vi. 11; vii. 2; vii. 13.
[2] Phil. iv. 1.
[3] I Thess. ii. 19, 20.
[4] II Cor. v. 20.
[5] F. W. H. Myers, "Poems," 1870, p. 5, "St. Paul."

munity itself. Those who have found the life in Christ are separated from "a crooked and perverse generation," and "shine like stars in a dark world." [1] The social ideal of Paul is less comprehensive than that which Jesus announced, when at the beginning of his ministry he said, "I must preach the glad news of the Reign of God." [2] What Paul had in mind was the Christian community, the upbuilding of a body of Christ, in which each member should have its part in the Ecclesia of God.[3]

Yet here again, as so often happens, Paul's teaching outruns his purpose, and he builds better than he knows. No truth has become more congenial or convincing to the modern mind than that of human solidarity. Membership one of another has been discovered to be the principle of stability, alike in the family, the community, the nation, and the world. When Paul says, "If one member suffers, all the members share its suffering," [4] he is in fact stating a law which governs, not only Christian fellowship, but political and economic welfare. The primary condition of a reëstablished prosperity and peace among the dissensions and distrusts of the world to-day is in a renewed and universal acceptance of the social

[1] Phil. ii. 15, citing Deut. xxxii. 5.

[2] Luke iv. 43.

[3] I Cor. i. 2; II Cor. i. 1. *Cf.* Dodd, "The Meaning of Paul for Today," 1920, pp. 138 ff. "The Divine Commonwealth Discovered."

[4] I Cor. xii. 26.

ethics of Paul. There are many members, but one body. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you;' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'. . . . The various members should have a common concern for one another." [1] The conscious aim of the apostle for the body of Christ has expanded into the hope of international association. If, in an individual, or in the Church, or in the nation, the new accessions of liberty, of power, and of growth which are gained through Christian loyalty are to be applied as instruments of aggression and domination, then not only the Ecclesia of God will languish but the world itself will be dismembered and in ruins. If, on the other hand, isolated morality is seen to be social suicide, if the sanity of service shall succeed the madness of distrust, if liberty, power, and growth become dedicated to social regeneration, then, in a larger sense than the Apostle Paul himself could contemplate, there may be a verification of his ideal and a fresh recognition of his spiritual genius and authority.

[1] I Cor. xii. 21, 25.

CHAPTER VII

MESSENGER AND MASTER

THE reflections and suggestions thus far indicated lead one, finally, to renew the question with which they began, concerning the relation of the Apostle Paul to the life and work of Jesus. Are the contrasts of character and teaching so extreme that one must choose between the Messenger and the Master, and cannot accept both the Pauline teaching and the Gospel message; or is there, beneath the conspicuous differences which confront the reader, sufficient evidence of affinity to demonstrate that Paul is a lineal heir of the spiritual desire of Jesus, and through many wanderings of mind, as of body, in foreign regions of thought and faith, remains essentially a minister of Jesus Christ?

It must be admitted that the differences of emphasis are in their first effect startling. Seldom in history have two characters appeared to have less in common than those of Jesus and Paul. The one is habitually serene, self-possessed, and consistent. Only when his indignation is moved by the desecration of sacred places is his capacity for passion revealed, and it is suggestive to note that this uprush of righteous wrath so impressed its witnesses as to be reported in detail by all four

of the Evangelists.[1] All that can be surmised of the appearance of Paul leaves a wholly different impression. The portrait which Jowett draws,—"a poor, decrepit being, afflicted, perhaps, with palsy, certainly with some bodily defect,—led out of prison between Roman soldiers, probably at times faltering in speech; the creature, as he seemed to spectators, of nervous sensibility,"[2]—may exaggerate Paul's physical maladies; but he himself reports an opponent as saying, "His personality is weak and his delivery is beneath contempt,"[3] and an early tradition described him as "small in size, with meeting eyebrows, with a rather large nose, baldheaded, bowlegged, strongly built, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel."[4]

These reminiscences suggest the variable, yet occasionally inspired, personality, which Paul's letters themselves exhibit; at times a man with obvious foibles, but at times with the face and message of an angel. He is, as he writes to the

[1] Matt. xxi. 12 f.; Mark xi. 15 ff.; Luke xix. 45 ff.; John ii. 13 ff. *Cf.* also Matt. xxiii.

[2] *Op. cit.*, I. 303.

[3] II Cor. x. 10.

[4] "Acta Pauli et Theklæ," as cited by W. M. Ramsay, "The Church in the Roman Empire," 1893, p. 31 ff.: "The general opinion of recent scholars is that this tale was composed about the latter part of the second century; and in that case it would have no historical value, except so far as it quoted older documents. . . This plain and unflattering account of the Apostle's personal appearance seems to embody a very early tradition." The document is discussed by Ramsay in detail, p. 375 ff.

Corinthians, "humble enough to your face when he is with you, but outspoken enough when he gets away from you." [1] He can be violent, ironical, harsh; he consigns one offender "to Satan;" [2] he writes of others, "Beware of these dogs;" [3] he ridicules those who "want to make a grand display in the flesh;" [4] he is convicted by his own confession of a temper so easily provoked that it yields to language which is violent and even coarse.[5]

Yet, on the other hand, no man was ever more lavish in affection, eager for friendship, considerate of weakness, or quick with comfort and relief. "Who is weak," he says, "and I do not feel his weakness?" [6] "My letter was written to you . . . in order to let you realize before God how seriously you do care for me. That is what comforts me." [7] "If I am comforted, it is in the interests of your comfort, which is effective as it nerves you to endure the same sufferings as I suffer myself." [8] How undisguised, intimate, human, such a man must have been! The personality of Jesus may have seemed, even to his companions, detached, apart, above them; the personality of Paul must have seemed to his correspondents interpretable, famil-

[1] II Cor. x. 1.
[2] I Cor. v. 5.
[3] Phil. iii. 2.
[4] Gal. vi. 12.
[5] Gal. v. 12. (Note also the report in Acts xxiii. 2.) *Cf.* Weinel, *op. cit.*, 2te Aufl., ss. 267, 280.
[6] II Cor. xi. 29.
[7] II Cor. vii. 12 f.
[8] II Cor. i. 6.

iar, like themselves. Flashes of humor or satire sparkle in his letters, and bring him nearer to the common level of life, as a playful remark in a modern speech arrests attention and quickens sympathy. "I am in the rôle of a 'fool,' now, on this business of boasting. . . . You put up with fools so readily, you who know so much!" [1] "You put up with it all right, when some interloper preaches a second Jesus." [2] "If anyone imagines he is somebody, . . . he is nobody." [3] Humor there was at times in the talk of Jesus, as in his parable of the unfaithful steward; [4] and satire, as in his comparison of this generation with children at their games calling petulantly to their reluctant playmates; [5] but these moments which seem to show Jesus with a smile on his grave countenance are like glints of sunshine lighting up a sombre day. For the most part, his mind moved above the incidents of his career, and the events of nature and life about him were but parables of his own mission or of his Father's care. To pass from such serene elevation of mind to the character of Paul is as when the disciples came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, where they had heard a voice saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved," and found the other disciples with "a

[1] II Cor. xi. 17, 19.

[2] II Cor. xi. 4. *Cf.* Strachan, "The Individuality of S. Paul," 1916, p. 288.

[3] Gal. vi. 3.

[4] Luke xvi. 1–9. See also the ingenious interpretations of G. W. Buckley, "The Wit and Wisdom of Jesus," 1910, p. 49 ff.

[5] Matt. xi. 16 ff.

large crowd round them, and some scribes arguing." [1] Paul is no calm and exalted master, such as spoke the Sermon on the Mount and taught in lovely parables, but a consciously unstable, hasty, and ardent nature, applying his eager mind to determine the place of his new faith among the philosophies and cosmologies of his time. The much debated conclusion of Wrede, "In comparison with Jesus Paul is essentially a new phenomenon," [2] would seem, at least in these external contrasts, amply justified.

These differences of type become even more conspicuous when one observes the contrast, not only of characters, but of aims. The mission of Jesus has a sublime simplicity. Doctrines concerning God and the world, sacraments and rituals, church organization and government, a scheme of redemption and a descending Saviour, have no place in his message of the "Realm of God." In none of the synoptic Gospels can more than a single verse be discovered which may be definitely described as theological in character,[3] and the discordant note which this verse strikes among the consoling words "to the laboring and burdened" suggests some doubt of its authenticity.[4] The message of Jesus is to the individual,—a searching,

[1] Mark, ix. 7, 14.

[2] W. Wrede, "Paul," tr. 1907, p. 165.

[3] Matt. xi. 27 = Luke x. 22.

[4] Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 263; "Against the genuineness of the one distinctively theological saying, that of Matthew xi. 27 ff., objections can be urged that to me at least seem decisive."

cleansing, reassuring ministry for the single soul: "Come and follow me";[1] "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and so follow me";[2] "The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost."[3] Jesus has no controversy with the Jewish law. On the contrary, he exalts it as a way to life eternal. "A right answer," he says to the lawyer who cites the ancient Scripture, "Do that and you will live."[4] "Do not imagine I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfil."[5]

Paul's agile mind seizes on this beautiful tradition and moulds it into what seems to him a more durable form. The Galilean Gospel is merged in a cosmic scheme. The parental God, persuading his children to obedience, that they may be "sons of your Father in heaven,"[6] becomes an intervening God, adopting those who have "received the spirit of Sonship."[7] Bondage to sin, release through the spirit, a heavenly Mediator appearing in human form "to die upon the cross," whom "God raised . . . high and conferred on him a Name above all names,"[8]—all this is in the language of a world as remote from that of Jesus as imperial Rome was from provincial Nazareth. One of the most revered of German theologians, estimating the meaning of Paul for the modern

[1] Mark x. 21.
[2] Matt. xvi. 24; Mark. viii. 34; Luke ix. 23.
[3] Luke xix. 10.
[4] Luke x. 28; Lev. xviii. 5.
[5] Matt. v. 17.
[6] Matt. v. 45.
[7] Rom. viii. 15.
[8] Phil. ii. 8, 9.

Christian, has summarized, in words posthumously published, his conclusion: "The entire outline of his picture of the world and of his doctrine of redemption appears to us mythological. . . . Everything in his way of thinking has become foreign to us. . . . We can appropriate the main conception of Paul's thought only by transforming it." [1] Even the acceptance of Messiahship by Jesus was, it seems probable, an incident of the last months of his life, "dawning on him gradually through a process of doubt and struggle;" [2] and it was obviously impossible for him to initiate a cult of which he himself should be the object, while at the same time saying, "Why call me 'good'? No one is good, no one but God." [3] In all this area of Paul's speculative mysticism, the reader of the Gospels finds himself in a foreign land, where a new language is heard and new ways of thought must be explored.

Yet, beside this recognition of a new religious type, a still more surprising discovery awaits the inquirer as he penetrates beyond the margin of the teaching of Paul. For it soon appears that this venturesome spirit, though his explorations of thought, like the journeys of his mission, carry him into new worlds, is still steadied, as if by a sense of home, through what he calls "a single

[1] J. Weiss, "Die Bedeutung des Paulus für den modernen Christen" (in Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 1919–20, ss. 129–131).

[2] E. F. Scott, "The Kingdom and the Messiah," 1911, p. 174.

[3] Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19; but compare Matt. xix. 17.

devotion to Christ," [1] and returns from his intellectual wanderings with undiminished loyalty to the message of Jesus. Paul is, it is true, concerned for the most part, not with historical evidence but with spiritual vitality; not with perpetuating a tradition but with propagating a cause; not with defining Christology but with appropriating Christ; not with organizing a church but with upbuilding a body of Christ; yet, in each of these reactions from externalism, legalism, and Pharisaism, the mind of Paul approaches the mind of Jesus. The life of the spirit remains a constant struggle against the flesh and the dæmonic powers of which the tranquil character of Jesus shows no sign. Nothing could be more remote from that gracious nature which "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man," [2] than the passionate self-reproach of Paul: "I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." [3] Yet the more divergent these types of character seem, and the farther from each other in intellectual horizon, the more one is impressed by the reappearance in Paul's teaching, and in its most fervid appeals, of the essential note of the Gospel message. His letter to the Romans, for example, sweeps grandly through its great conceptions of God's plan for man; but at its close issues into counsels and warning which bear unmistakable marks of the influence of Jesus. Who can read the admonition: "Bless those who make a practice of persecuting you;

[1] II Cor. xi. 3. [2] Luke ii. 52. [3] Rom. vii. 25.

bless them instead of cursing them," [1] without recalling the earlier words, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"; [2] or the saying, "Never pay back evil for evil," [3] without remembering the command of Jesus, "I tell you, you are not to resist an injury"? [4] What is Paul's warning, "Magistrates are God's officers. . . . Pay them all their respective dues, tribute to one, taxes to another, respect to this man, honour to that," [5] but a restatement of the principle which Jesus announced when the Pharisees "plotted to trap him in his talk,"—"Give Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, give God what belongs to God"? [6] If the first chapters of the letter to the Romans carry the reader far from the Sermon on the Mount the last chapters bring him back again. The perplexing arguments and speculations which have fascinated the learned and bewildered the simple fall away, to use Paul's image, like the veil which Moses hung over his face,[7] when the apostle proceeds from his discussion of the "inscrutable judgments" of God,[8] and abruptly writes, "My brothers, I appeal to you by all the mercy of God to dedicate your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God." [9]

The impression thus made by the letter to the Romans is felt again as one reviews the first letter

[1] Rom. xii. 14.
[2] Matt. v. 44.
[3] Rom. xii. 17.
[4] Matt. v. 39.
[5] Rom. xiii. 6, 7.
[6] Matt. xxii. 15, 21; Mark xii. 17; Luke xx. 25.
[7] II Cor. iii. 13.
[8] Rom. xi. 33.
[9] Rom. xii. 1.

to the Corinthians, where Paul passes from varied instructions and admonitions and suddenly changes the whole key of teaching as he strikes a lyric chord. He has begun by asking, "Has Christ been parcelled out?" [1] and proceeds with such exhortations as "I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but it was God who made the seed grow;" [2] and "'all things are lawful'? Yes, but not all are good for us;" [3] and even with such incidental questions as whether a woman should pray to God while unveiled.[4] In these affirmations and expostulations there is no suggestion of the note of the Gospels. Then, as though Paul had fought his way through these entangling maxims and problems and found himself at last on an open road, he calls as it were, to his comrades: "I will go on to show you a still higher path," and forthwith breaks into song. It is not so much a resemblance to the teaching of Jesus which meets one here as a reiteration of it. The Master had said, "Many will say to me at that Day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?' . . . Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you';" [5] and Paul repeats after him, "I may prophesy, fathom all mysteries and secret lore . . . but if I have no love, I count for nothing." [6] Jesus says, "If you had faith the size of a grain of mustard-seed, you could say to this hill, 'Move from here to there,' and remove it would;" [7] and Paul

[1] I Cor. i. 13.
[2] I Cor. iii. 6.
[3] I Cor. x. 23.
[4] I Cor. xi. 13.
[5] Matt. vii. 22, 23.
[6] I Cor. xiii. 2.
[7] Matt. xvii. 20.

adds the complemental truth, "I may have such absolute faith that I can move hills from their place, but if I have no love, I count for nothing." [1] Jesus teaches, "When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing," [2] and Paul renews this warning against self-interested duty-doing, "I may distribute all I possess in charity, . . . but if I have no love, I make nothing of it." [3]

Thus the teachings of the Gospels and the Epistles, divergent as they are in many details, contain a whole series of parallelisms in intention and ideal; and, finally, as the "Higher Path" is followed to its end, the two ways converge toward a single point. The supreme principle of life to Jesus was the law of love. The greatest commands in the Law, he says, are, "You must love the Lord your God," and "You must love your neighbour as yourself;" [4] and the final reminiscence of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel strikes the same key with a richer harmony: "By this everyone will recognize that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." [5] The teaching of Paul rises to the same climax, though it gives to love a new place in the hierarchy of virtues. With Jesus, love is the initial step in the life of faith. "Love your enemies . . . that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." [6] With Paul, on the other hand, love is the end and summary of the Christian life. Its

[1] I Cor. xiii. 2.
[2] Matt. vi. 3.
[3] I Cor. xiii. 3.
[4] Matt. xxii. 37, 39.
[5] John xvi. 35.
[6] Matt. v. 44, 45.

crowning quality is its permanence. Love, like faith and hope, "lasts on." Evanescent and intangible as its manifestations seem to be, they have, Paul teaches, a durability and continuity which neither prophecy nor tongues, neither preaching nor praying, can achieve. "The seen is transient, the unseen eternal." [1] Neither organization nor ritual, neither healing nor miracles, have in them the permanence promised to the grace of self-forgetting love. The most secure investment one can make is in friendship. The strength of the Church is in its self-forgetting service. Its apostolic succession is in apostolic beneficence. Orthodoxy, as the word implies, is the doctrine of the straight road; and that highroad is the way of love. "You must be perfect," says Jesus, "as your heavenly Father is perfect;" [2] and this ideal, which has so often seemed to consciously imperfect lives remote and unattainable, is brought near to practicability in Paul's rule of conduct: "You must be loving, for love is the link of the perfect life." [3]

[1] II Cor. iv. 18.

[2] Matt. v. 48.

[3] Col. iii. 14. The parallels and likenesses between the writings of Paul and the sayings reported of Jesus have been elaborately examined; sometimes, it would appear, with exaggerated ingenuity. (*E. g.*, Resch, in "Texte und Untersuchungen," V. 1889.) It would seem probable that the conclusion of Titius ("N. T. Lehre von der Seligkeit," 1900, II. 12) is justified: "Although an unqualified reference to the Lord's words rarely occurs, allusions to them are, on the contrary, not infrequent." Little, perhaps, can be inferred from the use of single words or phrases,

If these impressions of Paul's teaching are in any degree justified, it remains to consider whether their fragmentary conclusions can be gathered up into an outline of the personality of the apostle, as he went his way through the dramatic events of his career. What was, on the whole, the impression made on his contemporaries by this extraordinary man and what part can be legitimately claimed for him among the unpredecented

such as "steward" (I Cor. iv. 1, 2; Luke xii. 42), "husbandry" (I Cor. iii. 9 A. V.; Matt. xxi. 33 A. V.), "exalt" and "humble" (II Cor. xi. 7 A. V.; Matt. xxiii. 12 A. V.); for such reiteration may represent nothing more than familiar metaphors or proverbs. On the other hand are the passages in which Paul definitely claims to quote "the Lord." *E. g.*, I Cor. xi. 23 ff., the Last Supper; I Cor. vii. 10: "These are my instructions (and they are the Lord's, not mine);" I Cor. ix. 14: "The Lord's instructions were that those who proclaim the gospel are to get their living by the gospel;" I Thess. iv. 15: "For we tell you, as the Lord has told us."

To these may be added the passages in Paul which are so reminiscent of the Gospel that they may be reasonably regarded as echoes either of the sayings of Jesus or of his earlier disciples. Thus J. Weiss concludes ("Urchristentum," 1917, s. 431): "The unmistakable echoes of the Lord's words are evidence of acquaintance with the Gospel tradition, but still more of an inner acceptance of its thought and of legal recognition of its commands." Of the instances collected by Titius, Weiss regards as the most convincing:

Romans xii. 14, 17.
I Cor. iv. 12; vi. 7 = Luke vi. 27 f.
I Cor. ix. 19 = Mark x. 44 f.
II Cor. xi. 7 = Matt. xxiii. 11 f.
Rom. ii. 1; xiv. 13 = Matt. vii. 1, 2.
Rom. xvi. 19 [= Matt. x. 16.
Phil. iv. 6] = Matt. vi. 25.

conditions of the modern world? As one tries, once more, to visualize the real Paul, one is at first bewildered, as his contemporaries undoubtedly were, by the extraordinary fusion of conflicting elements which he exhibits. Hardly has one conclusion been reached concerning him than the opposite trait becomes conspicuous. He was, it is true, physically slight and enfeebled, yet when at Lystra "the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted, 'The gods have come down to us,'" and called Paul Hermes, "since he was the chief spokesman." [1] He was not, in the strict sense, a scholar, and, instead of impressing the philosophers at Athens by his arguments, he provoked them to say, "Whatever does the fellow mean with his scraps of learning?" [2] Even his citation from "some of your own poets" did not carry him beyond the region of familiar quotations; and the estimate of him by his hearers is expressed in terms of sarcasm, if not of slang.[3]

[1] Acts xiv. 11, 12. Renan's portraiture would seem to be excessively disparaging: "The countenance of Paul was unattractive (*chétive*) and did not, it would seem, reflect the greatness of his soul. He was plain, short, thick-set, and bent. His strong shoulders carried grotesquely a small bald head. His pale face was covered with a thick beard; his nose was aquiline; his eyes piercing, and his eyebrows met on his forehead." "Les Apôtres," 1866, p. 170.

[2] Acts xvii. 18.

[3] W. M. Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller," 1890, p. 242 ff.: "The different opinions of the philosophers in v. 18 are purposely placed side by side with a touch of gentle sarcasm. . . . The first opinion is the most interesting; it contains a word of characteristically Athenian slang, *Spermologos*. . . Probably the nearest

Yet, if not an erudite scholar, Paul's mind had a versatility, alertness, and audacity which made each phase of thought about him yield its secret, and contribute to the enrichment of his teaching. Insight into unfamiliar ideas, keenness to appreciate and transform, reasoning colored by feeling, indifference to consistency and eagerness for new light,—these endowments, which give vivacity and momentum to thought, appear in an almost unique degree throughout the experience of Paul. His mind was that of an advocate, a messenger, a missionary. Lack of flexibility, incapacity to adapt one's self to environing and alien ideas, fixity of mind and condescension of manner,—these have been throughout all Christian history the intellectual obstacles to missionary success. To interpret foreign and even repellent conceptions as anticipations and foreshadowings of Christian truth; to regard the Law as holding "us as wards in discipline, till such time as Christ came;" [1] to "naturalize" Christianity, as has been wisely

and most instructive parallel in modern English life to *Spermologos* is 'Bounder'. . . Dean Farrar's reading, 'Picker-up of learning's crumbs,' is happy, but loses the touch of slang." The reference is to F. W. Farrar, "The Life and Work of St. Paul," 1879, I. 538: "To some he was 'apparently a proclaimer of strange deities;' to others he was a mere 'sparrow,' a mere 'seed-pecker'; (spermologos, a seed-pecking bird, applied as a contemptuous nickname to Athenian shoplifters and area sneaks)—'a picker-up of learning's crumbs'." (The allusion is to Browning's "Epistle of an Arab Physician," in "Men and Women": "Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs.")

[1] Gal. iii. 24.

said of the modern problem of foreign missions,[1] translating the Gospel not merely into the words but into the traditions of the antipodes, to become, as Paul again says, "to all men . . . all things, to save some by all and every means," [2]— these qualities are as essential for a missionary in the modern as in the ancient world, and equip him for effective service among Mohammedans or Buddhists or barbaric tribes, as Paul once commended the Christian Gospel to the mystics of the East and the sceptics of the West.

This intellectual susceptibility, which might easily lead to sophistry or swerve into hypocrisy, was, however, safeguarded in Paul by a further trait which is partly intellectual and partly moral. It was the unstudied refinement which is the mark of what the modern world calls a gentleman.[3] Passion, indignation and controversy are not

[1] E. C. Moore, "West and East," 1920, p. 128: "On the basis of that inner experience the naturalization of Christianity . . . may proceed. It is not an accommodation. It is not a compromise. It is not an overlaying of ancient elements, unchanged, by new ones which have no relation to them. It is not an admixture produced by heat and pressure. It is not the result of a theory. It is the product of a life. It is a true process of assimilation. Christianity is grafted upon the ancient national and racial life. The national life is grafted into the ancient trunk of Christianity, which then brings forth fruit after its kind."

[2] I Cor. ix. 22.

[3] *Cf.* Phillips Brooks on the "Teaching of Religion," 1878, cited in "Life and Letters," 1900, II. 200: "What impresses us most in the best, the most Godlike men we ever see is, I think, the inability to tell in them what of their power is intellectual and what is moral."

denied to a gentleman; he may be a good hater as well as a firm friend; but there is in him an intellectual generosity which precludes injustice and tempers rebukes with considerateness. No quality is more conspicuous in the Apostle Paul than this appreciation of other minds, which bears the inadequate name of tact. He may be apparently preoccupied, for example, with elaborate discussions of Abraham's promise and Israel's salvation, but he cannot close his letter in these terms of criticism or censure, and adds a long supplementary list of affectionate greetings to "fellow-workers" and "beloved," and the "members of their household," and "the brothers of their company," and the "church that meets in their house." "Salute Mary, who has worked hard for you." "Salute that choice Christian, Rufus." "Everyone has heard of your loyalty to the Gospel; it makes me rejoice over you." [1] Or again, he throws himself without reserve into the personal problems of his friends; "I know that as you share the sufferings you share the comfort also." [2] Or yet again, his sympathy is enriched by appreciation: "You are pained as God meant you to be pained, and so you got no harm." [3] How unconstrained in Paul is the trait which is often lacking in worthy people,—the grace of receiving! A substantial offering has been sent to him by the Philippians, and he writes, "It was a great joy to me in the Lord that your care for me could

[1] Rom. xvi. 3 ff.
[2] II Cor. i. 7.
[3] II Cor. vii. 9.

revive again; for what you lacked was never the care but the chance of showing it." [1]

Perhaps the most conspicuous instance in history of this disarming courtesy, this appreciation which may be at the same time a refutation, is when Paul, as reported in the Book of Acts, wins a hearing from the "men of Athens," not by rebuking them for the toleration of all manner of heathen cults, but by beginning his address with the famous words, "I observe at every turn that you are a most religious people. Why," he continues, "as I passed along and scanned your objects of worship, I actually came upon an altar with the inscription, To an Unknown God. Well, I proclaim to you what you worship in your ignorance." [2] The Stoics and Epicureans who "came across him" and who "occupied themselves with nothing else than repeating or listening to the latest novelty," [3] may well have "sneered," as the record says they did, at the orator's appeal; but some of his audience could not altogether resist the tact and refinement of his diplomatic appeal, and said, "We will hear you again on that subject," and some "did join him and believe." [4] It was the type of missionary preaching which no change of time or scene can make inapplicable or obsolete. A modern missionary, addressing the cultivated classes of China or Japan, has before him "a most religious people," and is called to exercise the same appreciative refinement which "Dionysius

[1] Phil. iv. 10.
[2] Acts xvii. 22–24.
[3] Acts xvii. 21.
[4] Acts xvii. 32, 34.

the Areopagite, a woman called Damaris, and some others," recognized as they listened to Paul. Frontal attack on racial prejudices, uninformed contempt for alien traditions, an attitude of Western superiority among rites and creeds so ancient as to make Christianity a religious upstart,—these have irritated or repelled many an Oriental mind, bred in habits of courtesy, toleration and restraint; and no preliminary study is more fundamental in the training of a Christian missionary than an examination and assimilation of the intelligent sympathy and gracious considerateness which stamp each appeal of Paul with the mark of a Christian gentleman.

Such are some of the traits which bring the Apostle Paul very near to the mind of the modern world. Is not this type of teacher,—approachable, intimate, authoritative, chastened by regrets, dedicated to service, with a passionate nature held in check and converting emotion into power—precisely the type which the modern world demands in its leaders, and to which it is ready to pledge its loyalty? May it not even be said that Western civilization is waiting for this kind of man to appear, as the whole creation waited in Paul's time "with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed"? [1] Courage, both moral and physical, intellectual capacity to mould the diverse interests of nations and classes into a single and stable order, sympathy with the weak, self-effacing service,—such are the marks of a

[1] Rom. viii. 19.

great man in the twentieth century as they were in the first; and of this fitness for leadership the most reassuring example in history is the Apostle Paul. Many a modern missionary has been cheered and fortified among alien faiths and unresponsive hearers by the sense of companionship with such a guide, and has recalled the confession of the lonely Newman, when in the course of his spiritual wanderings he found this trusted friend walking by his side:—

> "I dream'd that, with a passionate complaint,
> I wished me born amid God's deeds of might;
> And envied those who had the presence bright
> Of gifted Prophet and strong-hearted Saint,
> Whom my heart loves, and Fancy strives to paint.
> I turn'd, when straight a stranger met my sight,
> Came as my guest, and did awhile unite
> His lot with mine and lived without restraint.
> Courteous he was and grave,—so meek in mien,
> It seem'd untrue, or told a purpose weak;
> Yet, in the mood, he would with aptness speak,
> Or with stern force, or show of feelings keen,
> Marking deep craft, methought, or hidden pride:—
> Then came a voice,—'St. Paul is at thy side'." [1]

If, then, the characteristics thus enumerated represent in any degree the impression made on Paul's contemporaries as he journeyed through the cities of the Near East; if, while his hearers might question his scholarship, they could not but be moved by the acuteness and subtlety of

[1] J. H. Newman, "The Dream of Gerontius and other Poems," 1914, p. 147, "St. Paul."

his thought; if, while they might remember his flashes of hate, they recalled more vividly the charm of his friendship; if throughout the stormy controversies of his career he maintained the poise and restraint of a gentleman,—what must have been the dominating effect made by his message? What was his permanent contribution to Christian thought? What,—to renew the question with which this study began,—was the essential relationship of the apostle to his Lord, of the messenger to the Master?

Here, once more, it is the sense of difference which at first forces itself into notice. The Christ of Paul was a celestial Being, not a human Jesus; the salvation by faith which Paul announced was a far more complicated interpretation of religious experience than the simple loyalty which Jesus claimed. May not these differences, however, impressive and arresting as they are, be regarded as differences in the level of the teaching rather than in its intention? Paul is, as it were, bringing down the ideals of the Gospel to the level of discussion, and proving or testing them by prevailing rules of theology or ethics. He seems to ask himself repeatedly how the high experience of conversion and confession may be reduced to a scheme of justification and redemption. Jesus, on the other hand, is content to leave religious experience where he has found it, on the high places of aspiration and desire; to teach not from the plain but from the Mount; to go with the chosen few "up a high hill by themselves" and

be "in their presence . . . transfigured." [1] This habitual elevation of spirit is far above the thought of Paul, as he walks his arduous way along the dusty road of debate and duty. But here and there, as Paul proceeds, he ascends to the higher point of view; and as he thus approaches the summit of his own thought it is as if he found that some one had been there before, and his thought and language climb to the height where Jesus is most at home. What is best in Paul brings him nearest to Jesus. The more he escapes from the controversies which beset him and rises into freedom and power, the more his words become an echo of the sayings of Jesus, as though the Messenger had met the Master.

In his judicious and convincing study of the religious experience of Paul, Professor Percy Gardner suggests an interesting analogy between the composition of the physical atmosphere and that of the spiritual atmosphere which environs life.[2] Two elements, oxygen and nitrogen, are the main constituents of the air one breathes; the first "the furtherer of life and action;" the second, "which tempers the oxygen and fits it for the use of living creatures." "If a human being tried to breathe nitrogen, he would die; if he tried to breathe pure oxygen, the intensity of his life would destroy the life itself, and he would perish." "The inspiration of Jesus," the analogy proceeds, "is

[1] Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

[2] Percy Gardner, "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," 1911, pp. 238 ff.

pure oxygen, spiritual life full of the divine ideas. Yet the code set forth in the Sermon on the Mount is not merely unadapted for practice by any state or nation, but it would, if adopted, speedily produce euthanasia of that state or nation." The teaching of Paul "dilutes the oxygen with nitrogen until it is fit for breathing by living men and women."

Does this analogy, suggestive though it is, state with accuracy the facts of the physical atmosphere, or apply those facts with precision to the experiences of the spirit? It appears to make of Jesus an impracticable idealist, proposing a rule of life which it is impossible to practice, save in some "parasitic" group of mendicant Franciscans or communistic separatists. The only consistent Christian would be, it infers, a follower of Tolstoi, who "takes the precept not to resist evil almost literally," and the realization of whose programme would "bring to an end the possession of property, civil organization and government, and even domestic life." "Pauline morality is adapted to settled societies, not to wandering bands of enthusiasts. . . . This is the transmutation which was begun and partly carried out by Paul." So sweeping a denial of practicability for the teaching of Jesus, and so restricted a definition of his message, as covered by the single principle of non-resistance, must seem to many readers an inadequate appreciation of the scope and sanity of the Gospel. Chastening and appealing as was the pacifism of Tolstoi, can it be regarded as repro-

ducing the dominant teaching of Jesus, or did it, on the contrary, detach one incidental saying from a rich and many-sided message, and test the Christian character by a single and often impracticable rule?

Or, to return to the analogy proposed, must it be admitted that the teaching of Jesus is too pure to inhale, and that it must be "diluted" before it can be breathed? Is not the real contrast, in the spiritual as in the physical atmosphere, rather one of the level of life and of the varying barometric pressure which one encounters? It is quite true that physical health is more easily maintained at a moderate level where the atmospheric pressure is normal, and that as one ascends to a great height, the pressure is reduced and one's breath is quickened in the rarefied air; but it is also true that what one needs on those heights is not less oxygen but more. The daring Englishmen among the precipices of Mount Everest were in danger of dying, not from breathing pure oxygen, but from the lack of it to breathe. As the barometric pressure was reduced, nothing but an added supply of oxygen could revive their strength to climb. Is not this the real significance of the interesting analogy proposed? It is quite true that the nitrogen of alien ideas made Paul's teaching more easily inhaled by the Hellenic world, and that the principles and maxims derived from Paul still offer easier breathing-places for ordinary experience than does the lofty teaching of his Master. But when one is called to ascend to the

higher levels of life, and reaches, or even approaches, the summits of trial, sorrow, vision, communion, or love, where the atmospheric pressure of the ordinary world is diminished and the air is rarefied, then, if the quickened breath is to be quieted and the strength to climb restored, it must be, not by a diluting of the atmosphere, but by a fresh supply of pure oxygen; and the life which cannot sustain itself from its own resources breathes more freely as it inhales the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. When such an ascent summons one from a narrow horizon and low environment to the heights of contemplation or resolution or hope, it is reassuring to discover that even so great a soul as that of the Apostle Paul has gone the same steep way, from the valleys to the hills. On the lower level his life is sufficiently sustained by the atmosphere of his own time; but when he goes up to the summit of his argument, or mounts from argument to vision, then, in that rarefied air, what he needs and prays for, as with a cry for help, is a fresh supply of the spirit of Jesus. The Messenger turns to the Master as to a guide who is at home on these heights, and with a fresh inhalation of energy and hope, Paul exclaims: "It is no longer I who live, Christ lives in me!"

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